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THESIS

NATIONALISM IN OTTOMAN GREATER SYRIA 1840-1914: THE DIVISIVE LEGACY OF SECTARIANISM

by

Gregory A. Francioch

December 2008

Thesis Advisor:	Anne Marie Baylouny
Second Reader:	Boris Keyser

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As a result of being a leading world power within the community of nation states, the United States is confronted with the weighty task of how best to employ its influence in creating conditions for a sustainable, peaceful, and just international system of interactions between nation states. Syria and Lebanon pose some of the most challenging problems to policymakers working to achieve these conditions. Exploring the historical origin of nationalism and sectarianism in Ottoman Greater Syria prior to the outbreak of World War I in 1914, may offer important insights as to unique regional attitudes and sensitivities with respect to democratic reform. This study seeks to demonstrate that nationalists in Greater Syria within the context of a reforming Ottoman Empire prior to World War I failed to form a cohesive political expression of intentions through united action, thus allowing the formation of separate Lebanese and Syrian states. The legacy of an incoherent national identity as a result of competing sectarian visions is an internally divided Lebanese state that struggles to overcome its ineffectual democratic institutions and a Syrian state encumbered by an entrenched authoritarian regime.

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NATIONALISM IN OTTOMAN GREATER SYRIA 1840-1914:
THE DIVISIVE LEGACY OF SECTARIANISM

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

As a result of being a leading world power within the community of nation states, the United States is confronted with the weighty task of how best to employ its influence in creating conditions for a sustainable, peaceful, and just international system of interactions between nation states. Syria and Lebanon pose some of the most challenging problems to policymakers working to achieve these conditions. Exploring the historical origin of nationalism and sectarianism in Ottoman Greater Syria prior to the outbreak of World War I in 1914, may offer important insights as to unique regional attitudes and sensitivities with respect to democratic reform. This study seeks to demonstrate that nationalists in Greater Syria within the context of a reforming Ottoman Empire prior to World War I failed to form a cohesive political expression of intentions through united action, thus allowing the formation of separate Lebanese and Syrian states. The legacy of an incoherent national identity as a result of competing sectarian visions is an internally divided Lebanese state that struggles to overcome its ineffectual democratic institutions and a Syrian state encumbered by an entrenched authoritarian regime.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

The separation of Mount Lebanon and other portions of Greater Syria to form the modern nation state of Lebanon in 1920 represented a political reality that for Arab nationalists was "unacceptable at every level."[1] Despite knowledge that a strong majority of the populace supported independence in Greater Syria after World War I, both Great Britain and France flouted this expression of national self-determination in favor of their respective national economic interests.[2] Why was there no mass mobilization behind a single or even multiple national movement(s) in Greater Syria prior to World War I? This study intends to discover how nationalists in Greater Syria failed to coherently express any national vision prior to World War I, and instead they facilitated the formation of separate states of Lebanon and Syria under French mandate. The implications of this study extend to the current volatility in the modern state of Lebanon, as internal sectarian divisions and external interests of powerful nation states have engendered competing nationalist visions that threaten its existence as a unified nation state. Furthermore, it also provides a historical basis for the current authoritarian rule of the Ba'ath party in Syria and its perceived vital interests in Lebanese internal affairs.

B. IMPORTANCE

As a result of being a leading world power within the community of nation states, the United States is confronted with the weighty task of how best to employ its influence in creating conditions for a sustainable, peaceful, and just international system of interactions between nation states. The Levant, including Syria and Lebanon in particular, pose some of the most challenging problems with respect to implementation of

[1] Kamal S. Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 39.

[2] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London; Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto, 2007), 78.

U.S. policy to ultimately accomplish the previously stated goal. In Lebanon, the central problem is reconciling the interests of competing sectarian communities to reform the divisive and ineffectual confessional system through truth and reconciliation that hopefully will result in secular democracy where political interests transcend religious or ethnic identities.

The principal problem in Syria is increasing the pace of democratic reform without either the chaos associated with a forcible change in leadership or the violent instability often associated with democratizing societies. Exploring the historical origin of nationalism and sectarianism in Ottoman Greater Syria prior to the outbreak of World War I in 1914, may offer important insights as to unique regional attitudes and sensitivities with respect to democratic reform. It also might stimulate discussion and more careful consideration of possible avenues of approach for U.S. policymakers when engaging Syrian or Lebanese officials on the issue of democratic reform.

As previously mentioned, U.S. calls for honoring Arab nationalist self-determination went unheeded by senior members of the alliance, effectively dividing Greater Syria into two states that were fundamentally linked through shared historical experience as Ottoman subjects and members of the Arab nation. This division favored the interests of an outlying minority Maronite community, while ensuring the commercial interests of both local and European elites. As a result, the French Colonial Mandate bequeathed to the Middle East a Lebanese state with a perpetually problematic communitarian system of governance that has been incapable of maintaining either internal or external sovereignty, and a jaundiced neighboring state of Syria that has intervened in Lebanese internal affairs, arguably in order to maintain a certain modicum of regional stability in the wake of declining French power. Taking the Syro-Lebanese example where both external and internal factors acted to prevent Arab nationalists from attaining an independent unified nation state prior to World War I, may yield informative insights with respect to achieving a higher degree of regional stability while simultaneously encouraging the development of democratic institutions such as justice and the rule of law, free and fair elections, and a greater degree of equality for minorities and women.

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

There are several possible problems related to the discovery of why Arab nationalism failed to achieve an independent, unified nation state in Greater Syria prior to the First World War. Most important is the origin of nationalism in the Ottoman province. Who were the movement's original proponents, and what were their motives? How did the movement manifest itself politically? Were there divisions within the movement that did not fall neatly along sectarian lines? Answers to these questions are important; though finding an unbiased historical account is outside the realm of possibility. Thus, it will be important to understand and acknowledge the inherent bias of each interpretation of events. Achieving this understanding may well lead to greater insight of how forces both intentional and accidental came to bear on the historical outcome. Another problem will be finding comprehensive statistical analysis of the Ottoman Empire's political landscape, as there were no political analyses or opinion polls conducted by independent media sources or think tanks. Accordingly, this study will have to focus primarily on the biased accounts of those officials who were directly involved in the relevant processes. A third limitation associated with this study is my inability to read and speak Arabic, thus narrowing my range of available literature to either French or English publications.

Despite these problems, this study will demonstrate that nationalists in Greater Syria within the context of a reforming Ottoman Empire prior to World War I failed to form a cohesive political expression of intentions through united action, thus allowing the formation of separate Lebanese and Syrian states. This failure was attributable to three primary factors. First, the increased salience of sectarian identification as a determinant factor in political loyalty and action among the larger population prevented a unified Arab national vision. These cleavages highlighted a decided philosophical difference between Christian and Muslim national visions, as well as encouraging the parallel efforts of the Maronite Lebanists within the Christian sect. Second, elites, desiring to maintain their commercial interests and social status in the Ottoman system, exercised conscious reluctance to openly support a nationalist movement. Third, the movement's

confinement to secrecy during thirty years of Hamidian repression limited the wider distribution of national ideas to the larger population of Greater Syria.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to effectively analyze the origins Arab nationalism and its failure to manifest itself in an independent nation state, one must take an analytical approach that includes close examination of Ottoman institutions in Greater Syria and whether they either consciously or accidentally prevented the coherent expression of Arab nationalism. With respect to states that emerged under colonial mandate, Beverly Crawford, provides a framework for taking an institutional approach to analyzing the political landscape of a particular state and its level of stability. She asserted, "…Institutions embody a social contract between state and society."[3] The incentives or constraints included in such an agreement have explanatory significance vis-à-vis cultural conflict or cooperation within a state. Specifically with respect to states formed under colonial influence, Crawford found that the colonial power "separated subjugated populations along ethnic and sectarian lines," giving "political entrepreneurs" opportunities to gain political access, resist colonial authority, and then be principal architects of new institutions when independence was attained.[4] This fundamental transformation that openly politicized society with respect to its various cultural identities, had profound implications for the division of political space within a state, providing the latent basis for civil conflict. Did Ottoman institutions allow competing colonial interests to fracture the Arab nationalist movement through the external promotion of sectarianism? To what degree were sectarian "political entrepreneurs" able to independently shape institutions without the benefit of colonial support?

There are several historical analyses that deal with the rise of Arab nationalism, which vary depending upon the perspective of the author. Kamal Salibi, wrote *A House of Many Mansions* in the concluding years of the civil war from 1975-89. He endeavored

[3] Beverly Crawford and CDL e-Scholarship Repository, "The Causes of Cultural Conflict: An Institutional Approach," 17.

[4] Ibid., 18-19.

to explain how the Lebanese state had spiraled out of control into sectarian based warfare for over a decade. He sought to discount the notion of Arab nationalism as "little more than a romantic notion whose full implications had not been carefully worked out."[5] In supporting this claim, he placed significant blame for the movement's apparent failure on the colonial powers, principally Great Britain and France, asserting that establishment of separate territorial mandates after World War I effectively snuffed out any opportunity for an Arab "national revival."[6] He pointed to the notion of an "overt…contest between different concepts of nationality" that overlay fundamental "covert…tribal rivalries and jealousies."[7]

Ussama Makdisi in *The Culture of Sectarianism* criticized Salibi's "revisionist history," advocating, "The beginning of sectarianism did not imply a reversion. It marked a rupture, the birth of a new culture that singled out religious affiliation as the defining public and political characteristic of a modern subject and citizen."[8] Makdisi's preference to utilize the relevant historical context provides a more remote perspective than that of Salibi in terms of both distance and time. Makdisi wrote his work from an American scholar's perspective nearly a decade after the conclusion of civil conflict with sectarianism remaining a powerful and evolving political force in Lebanon. The latter wrote his work in London under the auspices of the Centre for Lebanese Studies trying to find an adequate explanation of why the civil war still raged in Lebanon. With the phenomenon of sectarianism continuing to persist and evolve ten years after the war's conclusion, Makdisi sought to apply an institutional approach in an effort to achieve deeper understanding that transcends Salibi's primordialist bent, which the latter used to categorically dismiss past patterns as forgettable vestiges of backward early modern societies.

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[5] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 39.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 55.

[8] Ussama Samir Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 174.

Salibi made an important point with respect to Arab identity, acknowledging that the origins of Arab society pre-dated the introduction of Islam, though attributed Arab ascendancy directly to the spread of Mohammed's message beyond the immediate environs of Mecca and Medina. He qualified the Arabs' "lasting mark in history" made in the name of Islam, pointing out an important historical duality of being considered either Arab or Islamic.[9] This development posed a conundrum for Arabs when the secular Western notion of nationalism gained currency in the mid-nineteenth century because they were compelled to identify primarily with the universality of Islam at the expense of their national identity as connoted by common language and cultural tradition.[10] As a result, Arab society in Ottoman Greater Syria became striated along sectarian lines between Sunni Muslims, those considered deviant Muslims such as Shi'a and Druze, and non-Muslim Arabs such as Christians and Jews.

Albert Habib Hourani's seminal work, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, detailed the development of Arab thought, including both Christian and Muslim intellectuals who first articulated national ideas in an effort to respond to Western influence in the transformative period of reform. He asserted, "that explicit Arab nationalism, as a movement with political aims and importance, did not emerge until towards the end of the nineteenth century."[11]

Zeine N. Zeine in his work *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism* essentially agreed with this, though he did not find the evidence of underground activities of a small elite group of intellectuals spreading Arab nationalism in Beirut during the 1880s to be compelling. In making his point, Zeine cited an interview with one of those intellectuals, Faris Nimr Pasha, a Christian. Pasha refuted the idea that the group acted on nationalist ideals, because he felt that the salience of sectarian identities within Greater Syria took

9 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 40.

10 Ibid.

11 Albert Habib Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939. Issued Under the Auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 262.

precedence over those of a common Arab identity.[12] C. Ernest Dawn in the compilation, *The Origins of Arab Nationalism,* edited by Rashid Khalidi et al. joined the debate, attributing the rise of Arab nationalism to an "intra-Arab elite conflict" that involved peripheral elites who had been deprived of power and influence under the *Mutasarrifiya* against those who held positions within the Ottoman system.[13] Though there appears to be lack of consensus among historians as to the exact date or event that signified the birth of Arab nationalism, this characteristic uncertainty that continues to exist highlights the difficulty of obtaining accurate historical information in a modernizing authoritarian state.

Prior to the *Tanzimat* reforms in 1839, the salience of this division was largely minimized through communal judicial separation, as Christians, Jews, and divergent Islamic sects were allowed their judicial autonomy under the *millet* system. Salibi illustrated how Arab nationalism developed within this context primarily as a result of Arab Christian exposure to the ideas of Catholic and Protestant missionaries starting in the 1820s, which resonated with a uniquely Christian desire to be considered on an equal sociopolitical plane with their Muslim counterparts.[14] Sunni Muslims reacted quite differently to the Tanzimat reforms of the High Porte in Istanbul that effectively deprived the former of their favored social status under the Islamic Sultanate. They viewed nationalism and Islam as ostensibly the same idea and generally did not identify with the universal Arab nationality espoused by Christian intellectuals.[15] Salibi claimed average Sunnis were unable to grasp the "subtle" idea of universal equality regardless of religion, and that Christians merely regarded the Tanzimat reforms as an "Islamic ploy."[16] He attributed the actual awakening of Arab nationalism among Muslims only as a reaction to

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[12] Zeine N. Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism; with a Background Study of Arab-Turkish Relations in the Near East Uniform Title: Arab-Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism,* 3rd ed. (Delmar, N.Y: Caravan Books, 1973), 51-2.

[13] Rashid Khalidi, *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 11-12.

[14] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered,* 44-5.

[15] Ibid., 48-9.

[16] Ibid., 46.

the emergence of the Young Turks in 1908.[17] He concluded that beneath the competing visions of Arab nationalism is an ancient and enduring web of "tribal rivalries and jealousies."[18] James Gelvin in *Divided Loyalties* made the critique that considerations of Arab nationalism "ignored or glossed over fundamental differences that divided proponents of the Arab cause," providing the movement with a false "retrospective homogeneity and coherence."[19] This study will seek to demonstrate the incoherence resident within the Arab nationalist movement, rather than focusing on an exact time or event that signaled its conception.

Ussama Makdisi effectively countered Salibi's assertion of Arab nationalism as a European construct adapted and shaped along sectarian lines to provide modern cover for ancient tribal rivalries in *After 1860: Debating Religion, Reform, and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire*. In this work, he conducted a detailed analysis of the writings of Christian intellectual, Butrus al-Bustani, juxtaposed with the official proclamations of Ottoman official, Fuad Pasha. He encouraged historians to look outside their traditional narratives, whether from the Lebanese, Syrian, or Ottoman nationalist perspective. He suggested that they incorporate elements of both to perhaps better understand the instrumental nature of the debate in Ottoman Greater Syria about "the place of religion in a modem nation as well as the relationship between an emergent concept of citizen within a post-Tanzimat state."[20] He concluded that Bustani and Pasha both have the same goal of achieving peaceful coexistence, though within different paradigms.[21]

Bustani's secular nationalist view characterized the violent events of 1860 as the result of an emerging nation reverting to its pre-modern state. This regression could only be transcended through an effort to punish those responsible on all sides and to engage in constructive dialogue to resolve the sectarian differences in an Arab nationalist

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17 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 47.

18 Ibid., 55-6.

19 James L. Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (University of California Press, 1999).

20 Ussama Makdisi, "After 1860: Debating Religion, Reform, and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 4 (Nov. 2002): 602.

21 Ibid., 613.

discourse.[22] Pasha, for his part, sought to curb ancient hatreds in the "backward" Ottoman periphery through encouraging historical denial under the authoritarian narrative of severe repression and the reinforcement of sectarian autonomy.[23] Makdisi cited the inability or reluctance of both views to reconcile sectarianism with Arab civilization's eager embrace of modernity.[24] This is a much more nuanced approach than that of Salibi. He discussed sectarianism within the framework of a secular versus religious debate that occurred around the introduction of the western concept of a territorially defined nation state. Leila Fawaz in *An Occasion for War* approached the events of 1860 from a decidedly "post-Orientalist" angle, using an analytical framework that uses a "state-society nexus" in examining how diminishing Ottoman state power and its associated leadership hierarchy along economic and institution changes provided "the political space that was filled by sectarian networks."[25]

Christian intellectuals employed what may arguably be viewed as a revisionist version of regional history that pointed to its inhabitants sharing common origins from the era of the Phoenician culture. Asher Kaufman's *Reviving Phoenicia* investigated the origins of this dialogue. He cataloged its genesis as a popular idea among Maronite clergy beginning around 1840. Their exuberance dissipated under the *Mutasarrifiya*, however, as the Ottomans reasserted their authority under a Greek Orthodox Christian governor following the outburst of sectarian violence in 1860. These Lebanese nationalist sentiments, based upon a common Phoenician national myth, reemerged under the banner of secular Lebanese Christians at the outset of the twentieth century.[26] This expression of Lebanism represented what Salibi termed "Maronite particularism,"[27] in a "great confidence game" between Maronites and Sunnis who espoused an Islamic Arab

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[22] Makdisi, "After 1860: Debating Religion," 613.

[23] Ibid., 612-13.

[24] Ibid., 614-15.

[25] Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 5.

[26] Asher Kaufman, *Reviving Phoenicia: The Search for Identity in Lebanon* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 5-6.

[27] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 54.

nationalist vision. Further complicating matters, the Shi'a, Druze, and Greek Orthodox were suspicious of both Sunni and Maronite claims, choosing instead to identify with a pan-Syrian identity that was not articulated until the 1930s by Antun Saadeh.[28] At this point, however, Greater Syria had already been partitioned under French colonial mandate, making the non-Muslim voices for Arab nationalism appear muted prior to the critical period of state formation after the First World War.

Kaufman viewed this exclusive national vision as a radicalizing force that encouraged the idea of Lebanon as a "neo-Phoenicia" or non-Arab refuge in a predominantly Arab Muslim region.[29] These particular forms of nationalism that eschewed the overarching Arab version must be considered when examining how Greater Syria came to be partitioned into two separate nation states.

E. METHODS AND SOURCES

In attempting to answer why Arab nationalism failed to manifest itself in a single independent nation state prior to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, it will be necessary to conduct an historical analysis of the critical events from 1839 to 1914 in the development of sectarianism and nationalism that determined the eventual outcome of a partitioned Greater Syria. Prior to conducting this analysis, a comparative historical narrative outlining the principal sectarian versions of history within Greater Syria that were written to justify a particular nationalist current in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The analysis will primarily be accomplished through the consultation of secondary sources in the form of different historical narratives covering the period in question.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

This study is organized in three principal parts. Chapter II will outline the competing sectarian versions of Syro-Lebanese History, namely Shi'a, Druze, Maronite, and Sunni. This narrative will be informative with respect to the historical basis of

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[28] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 54.

[29] Kaufman, *Reviving Phoenicia: The Search for Identity in Lebanon*, 245.

communitarian rivalries that became salient throughout the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century, which had a deleterious effect on the coherence of nationalist sentiment within Greater Syria prior to World War I.

Chapter III will investigate the rise of sectarianism within the context of the Tanzimat reforms from 1839-1860. This was a critical period where traditional expressions of political power and identification based upon social status were replaced with those rooted in religious or ethnic affiliation. This transformation created a tense and uncertain atmosphere of fundamental social change that revolved around how to incorporate the Western concept of equal treatment of all citizens regardless of religion in a binding social contract between a state's ruler and its people. Close attention will be paid to the 1858 revolt of Tanius Shahin and the massacres of 1860, which culminated in the reintroduction of Ottoman authority. In analyzing this period, it will include an attempt to identify the critical factors that enabled the reification of sectarian identities and the emergence of competing nationalist visions within the region.

Chapter IV will identify the competing factors that critically hindered the ability of the national movement within Greater Syria to achieve mass mobilization in the aftermath of the 1860 civil conflict under the administration of the special Ottoman governorate, the *Mutasarrifiya*, prior to World I. These factors include a decided philosophical difference between Christian and Muslim national visions, the movement's confinement to secrecy during thirty years of Hamidian repression, the parallel efforts of the Maronite Lebanists, and a lack of elite political support until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.

Finally, Chapter V will draw conclusions based upon analysis conducted in the preceding chapters and determine what, if any, implications the incoherence of the nationalist movement in Greater Syria prior to World War I may have with respect to how U.S. policymakers might approach current policy challenges with respect to Syria and Lebanon.

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II. THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF SECTARIAN RIVALRY

When the Lebanese and Syrian Republics were established under French Mandate on September 1, 1920, the concept of Arab nationalism was, as Salibi termed, "little more than a romantic notion whose full implications had not been worked out."[30] Nationalists in Greater Syria had failed to manifest a cohesive response to the integration of Western political ideals prior to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire as a result of its defeat in the First World War. This allowed for the partition of Greater Syria into separate states under French colonial mandate, whose biased administration allowed the formation of state institutions based on a fundamentally exclusionary political and economic regime. The colonial legacy of French mandatory administrations has resulted in chronic instability and sectarian civil conflict in Lebanon and authoritarian dictatorship in Syria that persist to the present day. The principal factors that attributed to the inability of Arab nationalist aspirations to achieve mass mobilization and either an independent or autonomous Greater Syrian state were the inflexible policies of Ottoman Sultanate in the wake of its own Tanzimat reforms until the Young Turk revolt in 1908 and the conflicting inter-sectarian and parallel intra-sectarian national visions. Underlying these factors were the increased salience of political cleavages along sectarian lines. In order to adequately illustrate how these factors collectively prevented the coherent expression of nationalist sentiment, the origins of nationalist discourse in Greater Syria must be determined within its unique historical context.

The Ottoman Sultanate ruled over a population of which Sunni Muslims comprised the majority, though there were substantial minority communities that were afforded a degree of autonomy within the *millet* system. This "two-tier hierarchy"[31] of Muslims situated above the *dhimmi*, or Jewish and Christian communities, formed a parallel society that profoundly influenced the development of Arab nationalism. As exceptional members of the Ottoman realm, Christians and Jews occupied commercial,

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30 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 39.

31 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 3.

financial and artisan sectors of the economy, while the functions of internal security, governance, and exercise of military power were exclusively reserved for Muslims. In Mount Lebanon, this translated to a commercial class of Christians, many of whom were impoverished peasants, and a Druze "tribal-warrior" class whose privileges were legitimized with hereditary titles bestowed by the High Porte in exchange for their military loyalty.[32]

Traboulsi argues that this early geographic stratification of Mount Lebanon along sectarian lines formed the basis of the society's salient social and political cleavages during the era of modernization in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[33] These sectarian divisions remained latent within Ottoman society until the first of two Tanzimat reform decrees was instituted in 1839, making all subjects equal regardless of sectarian affiliation.

Other rifts that transcended sect membership proved more significant prior to the empire's desperate attempts at modernization. These included the distinction between landed nobility, *manasib,* and the peasantry,*'amma,* which encouraged open elite competition for power over who commanded larger tax revenues within the *iqta'* or feudal system that ultimately paid tribute to the High Porte in Istanbul. Another level of conflict within the pre-modern Ottoman system was frequent conflicts between local Ottoman governors or *walis* and the central authority in Istanbul.[34] Modernization and the associated massive social and political change facilitated a shift in societal structure that made the above class differences and quasi-feudal context of elite competition obsolete.

The institutionalization of sectarian identities as the primary basis for distinction in Greater Syrian society represented an elite response to the inexorable advance of European power and the attendant alien ideas of secular government, nationalism applied within a territorially defined state, and the theoretical equality of all citizens. This shift in

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[32] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 3.

[33] Ibid., 4.

[34] Ibid., 4-5.

elite competition that fell primarily along sectarian lines required a historical narrative that legitimized and maintained their grip on power within the new social and political paradigm. Through each sect's unique ethnic lens, these elites shaped widely various versions of a common historical experience. Thus, a review of the competing versions of Syro-Lebanese History and their influence on state formation and governance is instructive in characterizing the communitarian biases present at the time of state formation in Lebanon and Syria and its deleterious effect on Arab nationalist sentiment.

A. COMPETING SECTARIAN HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

1. The Maronites

The Maronite Christians have inhabited the area of Mount Lebanon since the early Islamic period. Although their religious rites are very similar to that of the Greek Orthodox (although conducted in Syriac), they became allied with the papacy of Rome in 1182 A.D. In 1910, Presbyterian missionary and founder of The American University of Beirut, Henry Jessup, described the Maronite people as a largely illiterate peasant order with an educated clergy who are, unlike Roman Catholic clergy, permitted to marry. Additionally the Maronite lay community viewed their patriarch in Antioch as a papal equivalent even though the latter had sworn allegiance to the Holy See in Rome.[35] Additionally, Jessup remarks that, "The Maronites of Lebanon are equal to the peasantry of Spain in their subjection to the priesthood and in ignorance and fanatical hostility to the Bible and the Protestant faith."[36] This early twentieth century view of the Maronites, as seen through the inherently biased lens of an American Protestant missionary, contrasts sharply with the Maronite view of themselves as a highly successful society with the critically important patronage of France.[37]

Following World War I, the Maronite Patriarch, Elias Hoyek, argued for the re-establishment of what he referred to as Biblical Lebanon which included, "…the coastal

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[35] Henry Jessup, "The Future of the Ottoman Empire," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science: International Reconstruction* 84, (July 1919), 20.

[36] Henry Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1910), 659.

[37] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 107.

towns of Tripoli, Beirut, Sidon and Tyre and their respective hinterlands…and the fertile valley of the Bekaa…, which belonged to the Vilayet of Damascus."[38] Hoyek argued that Greater Lebanon enjoyed a separate cultural heritage from that of Syria and should rightfully be carved out of the Syrian Protectorate as an independent nation state. In September of 1920, this is precisely what the French High Commissioner of Beirut decreed.[39] From the beginning, the fundamental question that has undermined the legitimacy of Lebanon as a nation has been simply, what does it mean to be Lebanese? The Maronite vision of Lebanon as a distinct historical phenomenon within the Arab world was argued to predate the existence of Islam and explicitly linked to that of West and the Mediterranean versus the Eastward bias of Muslims and other Christian sects such as the Greek Orthodox community. As Salibi explains:

> Theirs, it was claimed, was the heritage of ancient Phoenicia, which antedated the heritage they had come to share with the Arabs by thousands of years. Theirs, it was further claimed, was the broader Mediterranean heritage which they had once shared with Greece and Rome, and which they now shared with Western Europe. They also had a long tradition of proud mountain freedom and independence, which was exclusively theirs, none of their neighbours ever having had the historical experience.[40]

The Maronite version of Lebanon's essentially Western oriented, and thus intrinsically Christian foundations, differed significantly from those of their Sunni, Shi'a, and Druze Arab counterparts within Greater Syria.

2. The Sunnis

The Sunni version of Greater Syrian history dismisses the Maronite "Phoenician" argument as historically inaccurate, maintaining that the ancient Phoenicians were simply a group of coastal fishermen whose civilization simply died out. Additionally, the documented historical evidence of Maronite isolation to the hinterlands surrounding Mount Lebanon combined with the extended presence of Sunni Muslims in the coastal

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38 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 25.

39 Ibid., 26.

40 Ibid., 27.

cities of Lebanon, according to Salibi, would actually make the latter more likely descendants of the littoral dwelling Phoenicians.[41] Sunni Lebanese are keen to point out the well-documented historical reality that the area now known as Lebanon has existed as a sub-region of Syria under some form of nearly continuous Sunni rule for over 1200 years prior to the granting of the French Mandate and the partition of Lebanon and Syria in to independent states.[42]

The explosive spread of the Islamic faith from its origins in present day Saudi Arabia reached Greater Syria in the form of the Umayyad Caliphate, which spanned from present day Spain to India and held its capital in nearby Damascus from 661 AD through 750 AD. After deposing the Umayyad Caliphate, which was fatally weakened through internal dissent as a result of Arab exclusivism, the Abbasid Caliphate ruled roughly the same geographical area, minus Spain and Morocco, from its capital in Baghdad from 750 to 1258 AD.[43] During this time, the Caliphate began to decentralize itself politically, as the Abbasid caliphs were unable to pacify their Syrian domains that were intermittently embroiled in revolt out of both resentment for the region's diminished stature in the Caliphate and against perceived unfair taxation.[44] The independent principalities of the Tulunid's and the Ikhshidids controlled Southern Syria in succession from 868 until 969 AD while the Hamdanids ruled a principality in Northern Syria centered in Aleppo from 845 until 1070 AD.[45]

The interruption of Sunni rule in Syria occurred when the Shi'a Fatamid caliphate was established in Cairo in 909 AD, and conquered the Ikhshidids of Southern Syria in 969 AD, though the cities of Northern Syria remained subject to periodic harassment from Byzantine forces until the end of the tenth century. The rise of the Seljuk Sultanate

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41 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 174.

42 Ibid., 12.

43 William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 3rd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), 16.

44 Philip Khuri Hitti, *Lebanon in History: From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 3rd ed. (London, Melbourne: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), 268-9.

45 Ibid., 273-4.

of Isfahan in 1058, resulted in Sunni reclamation of Syria from the Fatamids in 1076.[46] In 1095, the Seljuks divided Syria into the two Sultanates of Damascus and Aleppo, which remained unmolested by the incursion of European forces during the Crusades.[47] In 1171, the Ayyubids overthrew the Fatamids in Cairo, occupying Damascus and Aleppo in 1174 and 1183 respectively. Beginning in 1258, the Abbasid capital of Baghdad and its Syrian hinterlands were sacked by Mongol hordes, though the Mamluks of Cairo subsequently chased the Mongol army and European Crusaders from Syria over the next three decades.[48] This was followed by a partnership between the Mamluks and the Abbasids, who maintained control of Syria until an Ottoman expansion in the early sixteenth century resulted in the end of Abbasid authority in Cairo, the relocation of the Prophet's mantle to Istanbul, and Ottoman dominion over Syria which endured until 1924.[49] The Sunni version of Greater Syrian history is one of near total political supremacy except for an interruption of a little more than a century, which community leaders sought to avoid through the promotion of a Sunni led Arab nationalism prior to and following the Ottoman collapse.

3. The Shi'a

The foundation of the conflict between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims dates back to a crisis of succession, which took place during the mid-seventh century. It pitted the powerful Syrian governor, Mu'awiyah, against the Prophet Muhammad's cousin, Ali. The two aspirants to power over the rapidly expanding Islamic Empire engaged in civil conflict in 657 at Siffin with no clear victor, though Ali lost significant support in the wake of the stalemate. This allowed Mu'awiyah to gain further power in Egypt and Syria, and forces loyal to him eventually murdered Ali in 661, thus leaving the former to

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46 Hitti, *Lebanon in History: From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 275-6.

47 Ibid., 291.

48 Ibid., 306-9.

49 Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 39-41.

uniquely claim the title of caliph.[50] The attempted rebellion of Ali's son, Husayn, in 680 that resulted in the latter's death in the Iraqi town of Karbala, cemented the rift between Shi'a and Sunni in the Islamic community.

> According to Shiite doctrine, the whole of Islamic history since the death of the Prophet, as commonly understood, was a sham…as represented first by the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs, then by successive dynasties of sultans, was illegitimate and unjust.[51]

The Shi'a have existed as an Islamic minority among the Sunni of Syria, whose interpretation of Islam and political dominance they did not accept.[52]

Shi'a Islam in Greater Syria dates back to the time of the Fatamid caliphate, centered alternately in Tunisia and Egypt, which exerted considerable influence in the region from the tenth to the twelfth century, vanquishing the Abbasid client regime, the Ikhshidids, from Egypt and coastal Syria.[53] Shi'a standing within Syria diminished with the Fatamid demise, as coastal cities were subjected to European Crusader and then Mongol incursions until the Sunni Mamluk ruler, Baybars, expelled the latter from Syria in 1260.[54] The Mamluk rulers initiated a series of military expeditions against Shi'a strongholds in the Kisrawan region north of Beirut at the end of the thirteenth century, finally defeating the latter in 1305.[55]

Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the *iqta* or feudal system that defined the parameters of social and political discourse in Greater Syria, became institutionalized under Mamluk power, as the Shi'a were relegated to the peasantry and compelled to serve their Sunni masters or *muqata'ji*.[56] Mamluk power waned due to intellectual stagnation endemic to the *madrasah* system of education that emphasized law

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50 Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 15.

51 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 206.

52 Ibid., 51.

53 Hitti, *Lebanon in History: From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 275-6.

54 Ibid., 305-6.

55 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 13-14.

56 Hitti, *Lebanon in History: From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 333-4.

and theology at the expense of science and the arts.[57] Economic stagnation also occurred as a result of European trade with Asia circumventing the seaports and land routes of Syria via the less expensive maritime route around the African continent. This allowed for the fragmentation of power within Syria. The Shi'a briefly regained a small measure of previously held influence with the Harfush ruling Ba'albak and northern Biqa at the onset of Ottoman power in the early sixteenth century.[58] The reassertion of Sunni dominance did not bode well for the family's fortunes.

The Druze and Maronite ascension to prominence under the Ma'an and Shihabi emirates further attenuated Shi'a political power and social standing. The Harfush suffered catastrophic defeat when they allied with the Ottomans and Sunni Sayfas of Tripoli against the Ma'an ruler, Fakhr al-Din II. He defeated their combined forces at the battle of 'Anjar, destroyed the Shi'a family estate in Ba'albak, and pillaged their land holdings in the Biqa valley in 1623.[59] Having been decisively defeated, the Shi'a were again condemned to the lower strata of Syro-Lebanese society until after the Iranian revolution of 1979, which signaled a resurgence of Shi'a power in the region under Amal.

In the long interregnum, the Shi'a came to accept the historical explanation that their being geographically concentrated in the hinterlands surrounding Mount Lebanon was necessitated by constant persecution throughout centuries of Sunni rule in Greater Syria,[60] despite the above historical reality of subjugation at the hands of a Druze ruler when allied with the Sunni governor and Sayfa clan. This seeming historical denial may be attributable to the Shi'a perception that Sunni religious doctrine and historical narrative are both fundamentally illegitimate. This, when coupled with centuries of political repression and Maronite exclusivist claims of Phoenician ancestry at the critical juncture of state formation, led the Shi'a to seek a categorical reversal of this

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57 Hitti, *Lebanon in History: From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 341-2.

58 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 5.

59 Ibid., 7.

60 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 135.

phenomenon of chronic subjugation. They sought to frame a nationalist discourse in terms of equality based upon the common Arab language shared by all inhabitants of Greater Syria.

4. The Druze

The Druze historical narrative is perhaps the most obscure of the principal sects of Greater Syria. It began as a religious movement inspired by disillusionment with the Shi'a Fatamid Caliphate in Egypt during the early eleventh century. The sect's adherents believe that the sixth Fatamid caliph, al-Hakim (996-1021), was God manifest in human form in accordance with Shi'a Isma'ili belief, though they distinguish themselves from other versions of Shiism in believing that al-Hakim was the last incarnation of God in human form and would re-emerge after his disappearance as the rightful ruler of the Islamic community. The eccentric caliph was assassinated in an alleged conspiracy orchestrated by his sister.[61]

The Druze dogma found little support in Egypt, whose population rejected the notion of al-Hakim's divinity. As a result his principal protagonist, Muhammad al-Darazi, fled to Greater Syria with the aim of establishing an altogether new religion, which discarded even the Isma'ilism from which it was born. Al-Hakim's successor, al-Zahir, nearly purged his domains of all Druze adherents with the exception of a few who escaped persecution to remain in hiding in Southern Lebanon. This forceful repression effectively closed off the Druze community from the outside world, as they were relegated to a secretive and isolated existence in remote homogeneous villages surrounding Mount Lebanon for the remainder of the Fatamid and Mamluk periods. Although they briefly reappeared in 1097 to do battle against the Crusaders, they only truly re-emerged from obscurity following the Ottoman conquest of Greater Syria.[62]

Following the dissolution of the Crusader states in 1291, at the hands of the Mamluks, the Druze survived as a community through isolation, dissimulation, and the

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[61] Hitti, *Lebanon in History: From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 257-8.

[62] Robert Brenton Betts, *The Druze* (London; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 10-14.

cooperation and conversion of the noble Ma'an family, which immigrated to the Shuf District southeast of Beirut and established the Druze city of Ba'qlin.[63] In 1516, the Ottomans granted the Druze political autonomy in exchange for recognition of the Sunni caliph in Istanbul, though the political landscape was characterized by persistent civil conflict and intrigue amongst the different minority tribal leaders, as they were obliged to balance their political fortunes between the rival concerns of powerful external forces, namely the Turkish Ottomans, the Egyptian Mamluks, and the Persian Safavids. This is a political theme that persists in the region to this day, albeit with different actors.

This balancing phenomenon was quickly made evident when in 1518 the Ma'ans forsook their promise to Istanbul, siding with the local Sunni tribal sheikh, Muhammad Ibn al-Hanash, in rebelling against the Ottomans in an effort to restore Mamluk power to the region. The Ottomans violently quashed the insurrection, capturing three Ma'an chiefs and executing untold numbers of rebel soldiers. In what might seem an incredible shift of allegiance, shortly thereafter the Druze family sided with the Ottomans against Istanbul's archrival Persian Safavids and their local clients, the aforementioned Shi'a Harfush of Ba'albak and the northern Biqa. The Druze family greatly benefitted from their newfound loyalty, gaining control of the coastal *sanjaks* (districts) of Sidon, Beirut, and Safad.[64]

After a period of relative calm under the Druze emir, Fakhr al-Din I, his son, Fakhr al-Din II, sought to capitalize upon Istanbul's preoccupation with internal intrigue and the Safafvid threat. He allied with the Kurdish leader of Aleppo, 'Ali Janbulad, against the Ottomans in a failed revolt in 1605-7, after which he maintained power through payment of a substantial indemnity to the Ottoman governor in Damascus. He consolidated his position, gaining support of the Maronite Khazin family, and he employed them as political agents or *mudabbirs*.[65] This formed the social norm within Greater Syria of Druze serving as warriors with the political consul of Maronite advisers.

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63 Betts, *The Druze*, 79.

64 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 5-6.

65 Ibid., 6.

Perhaps more significantly, he gained the favor of the Catholic Pope, Gregory XIII,[66] marking the beginning of European indirect influence in the region subsequent to the ineffective and costly campaigns of the Crusades in preceding centuries. Fakhr al-Din II alternately defied and supported the High Porte in Istanbul, while similarly shifting his local alliances to serve his political interests that superseded any sectarian or family loyalty. This reluctance to adhere to a strictly sectarian ethos might be explained in Traboulsi's claim that the primary factional concern during this period was the Qaysi-Yemeni conflict,[67] one that pre-dated Islam.

Fakhr al-Din II's appetite for political power and territorial expansion eventually exceeded the tolerance of the Ottomans, particularly after having defeated the combined Sunni/Shi'a forces of the Sayfas of Tripoli and the Harfushs who were aligned with the *wali* or governor of Damascus, whom he held captive in 1623. This humiliating circumstance, coupled with Tuscan support, led Istanbul to initiate a punitive military campaign that resulted in Fakhr al-Din II's ultimate defeat and execution.[68] Following the re-establishment of Ottoman control in 1633, almost two hundred years of internal Druze rivalry ensued, decimating the population.

The fall of the Ma'an family in favor of the Sunni Shihabs at the beginning of the eighteenth century allowed the Maronites to gain political power at Druze expense. Shihabi emirs exploited internal Druze elite rivalries and encouraged the development of a powerful Christian elite through the employment of *muddabirs* or political agents who were products of Western missionary education.[69] During the transformative period of the early nineteenth century the Druze would suffer devastating defeat at the hands of their rival Sunni and Maronite *muqata'jis.* Bashir Shihab II, who converted to Christianity to gain Maronite backing, literally and figuratively decapitated the Druze, killing Bashir Junbalat in 1825, and forcing the vast majority of Druze *muqata'jis* into

66 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 6.

67 Ibid., 5.

68 Ibid., 7.

69 Ibid., 9-10, 18-19.

exile, distributing their lands among his relatives.[70] The Druze endured further humiliation and defeat during the period of Egyptian rule under Ibrahim Pasha from 1831-39, as Bashir II's rule yielded to a far more coercive and centralized Egyptian regime. Bashir quickly accommodated Egyptian rule, whereas Druze elites such as the Janbulats and Nakads, who remained loyal to the Ottomans, were forced in to exile.[71]

During these decades of Druze revolt and subsequent defeat, the influence of the Maronites and Protestant missionaries increased in the formerly Druze dominated areas with the backing of their European sponsors. These developments, coupled with the rising power and influence of European states, led to a bitter conflict in 1860 between the Druze and Maronites, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. From this time until the Druze revolt of 1909, there were frequent clashes between Druze and Ottoman forces.[72]

This history of conflict and resistance led to mutual distrust between the Druze and anyone seeking to establish authority over them. They had been expelled from Egypt as a result of what the Druze perceived as impiety amongst the Fatamid Shi'a. Sunni Shihabi emirs had manipulated their loyalty and stolen their land with the aid of Maronite usurpers and Egyptian occupiers. Finally, as a result of sectarian violence, the Ottoman government in attempting to reassert its authority, discounted their loyalty and labeled them a deviant sect in the unruly Greater Syrian backwater of their crumbling empire. This historical perspective manifested itself in a very real way during the formation of the Lebanese Republic. History had imbued the Druze with a "Mistrustful suspicion of the majority…helped keep the Druze isolated from their neighbors and fiercely loyal to their own group. It also made them an ideal target for the French…to undermine Arab nationalism and its quest for Arab unity in the wake of the Ottoman collapse after World War I."[73]

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70 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 11.

71 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 52.

72 Betts, *The Druze*, 79-82.

73 Ibid., 83.

B. CONCLUSIONS

The four principal sects in Greater Syria possessed vastly divergent historical narratives at the critical moment prior to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Their disparate memories emanated from a society that was not characterized by the same rigid sectarian cleavages that existed at the conclusion of the First World War, though the previous discussion illustrates that the aperture of the historical lens was indeed shaped to reveal a uniquely ethnic account used to affirm or deny a particular nationalist affiliation. This inherently divisive phenomenon was instrumental in the disjointed and ultimately unsuccessful movement to create a single Arab nation state prior to World War I. An example of this is the Sunni nationalist argument that for nearly the entirety of Islamic history, Sunni Caliphs or Sultans ruled the area previously known as Southern Syria and thus any nationalist government should be formed with a Sunni head of state. The historical validity of this assertion, despite openly defying basic democratic principles of equal access to power regardless of race, stands in stark contrast to the Phoenician basis of Maronite Lebanism articulated by Michel Chiha.[74] The Sunni legacy in Syria is based on recorded, independently verifiable historical record and geographical reality, as opposed to the Maronite historical mythos of a primarily unverifiable ancient past used to justify a religious alliance between a minority group of Christians and the Papacy backed by French force of arms.

In the Sunni view of history, Maronite claims of Lebanese exceptionalism were not simply misguided, but politically manipulative. Sunnis perceived themselves to be under assault from subaltern minorities, namely Christians and Zionists, who sought to use the Tanzimat reforms as well as European capital and arms as a vehicle for revolutionary change that would deprive Sunnis of their socially privileged position. Thus, perhaps in reaction to these perceived threats, for Sunnis "Arabism was little more than another name for Islam…"[75] and "Arab history was inseparable from the history of the Sunnite Islamic state," for in the mind of the Sunni, "…there was no vision of history

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[74] Itamar Rabinovich and Itamar Rabinovich, *The War for Lebanon, 1970-1985* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 22.

[75] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 50.

…worthy of being called Arab national history…" due to the practical reality that, "Arab nationalism essentially involved the reclamation of the Islamic caliphate."[76]

It is this gulf between historical perspectives that rendered the foundation of nationalist discourse in Greater Syria prior to the Ottoman Empire's demise fundamentally unsound. An examination of the principal intellectual currents of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries will be conducted in Chapter Three to illustrate this point; however, in order to better inform such a discussion, it is necessary to conduct an examination of the origins of sectarianism in Greater Syria.

[76] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 209.

III. THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SECTARIANISM

A. THE RISE OF SECTARIANISM IN GREATER SYRIA

Having examined the vastly different historical myths that served to perpetuate individual sectarian interests at the time of state formation in Lebanon, it is now necessary to examine noteworthy events in the history of Greater Syria, which portended the emerging primacy of these divisive concerns. The sectarianism that became institutionalized throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, profoundly shaped the nationalist debate within Greater Syria. It included inter-sectarian differences between Christians and Muslims, as well as intra-sectarian rivalries between Maronite Christians and their Greek Catholic and Greek Orthodox co-religionists. These divisions, in addition to other factors discussed in the following chapter, proved critical to the inability of nationalists in Greater Syria to achieve mass mobilization for a separate Arab state prior to World War I and allowing for the eventual partition of the territory under colonial French mandate.

1. The Destablization of the *Muqata'ji* Order

Fawwaz Traboulsi details the complex dialectic that characterized the Ma'an and Shihabi emirates under Ottoman rule in his account *A History of Modern Lebanon*, which includes the complex relationship among the military power of Druze chieftains, Maronite ascendancy with increasing levels of popular education and European support, the increasingly marginalized and repressed Shi'a, and the often distracted Sunni elites of the High Porte in Istanbul. This last group concerned themselves more with external threats than with problems within their own domain.[77]

Despite formal religious ties between the Maronite Church and the Roman Catholic Church that date back to the 1180 Maronite recognition of Vatican supremacy,[78]

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77 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, Chapter 1.

78 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 72.

western interest in Greater Syria truly intensified with the introduction of the silk trade during the rule of the second Ma'n emir, Fakhr al-Din II, during the first thirty years of the seventeenth century. In addition to encouraging commercial ties with the West, the silk trade transformed the demographics of Mount Lebanon. Maronite peasants were encouraged to settle in southern Druze regions to work the land at the expense of the Shi'a population, who were forcibly evicted. Though immediately profitable for the Druze emir and his extended family, Maronite settlement ultimately made Christians a majority population in southern Lebanon. This created a "complex asymmetry [that] served as the matrix upon which the sectarian system and sectarian mobilization were built."[79] This population shift, coupled with increasing numbers of European missionary educated Maronites, created a new class who served their Druze overlords as *mudabbirs* or political agents. This growing Maronite elite gained wealth through their privileged status and began to rival their Druze and later Sunnite (Shihabi) landlords or *muqata'ji*.[80] Thus, the established allegiances within the community became obsolete, as Maronites grew in number and political strength in Mount Lebanon. This fundamental demographic change stretched the traditional system to its breaking point, which in turn significantly shaped the incoherent nationalist vision of the population of Greater Syria.

2. The Tax Revolt of 1820-1

This split first became evident in the peasant tax revolt of 1820-1, where Christians, Sunnis, Shi'a, and Druze in the northern enclaves of Mount Lebanon cooperated in an attempt to reduce the level of taxation under Bashir II. In his rise to power, the Sunni emir, who practiced Christianity in private,[81] had played Druze elites against one another, waged successful military campaigns against Shi'a, Sunni, and Alawi elites, and excluded Maronite *muddabirs* from his regime. Having consolidated his power, Bashir II formed an alliance with the Druze leader, Bashir Junblat. Despite these backhanded political machinations, the majority of Druze and Christian landowners

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79 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 7-8.

80 Ibid., 18.

81 Engin Deniz Akarli, *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861-1920* (University of California Press, 1993), 21.

refused to participate in the revolt. They consciously separated themselves from the "commoners" who proposed action against the emir.[82] All of these elite actions were in accordance with the pre-modern social paradigm of elite competition for land and influence that transcended sectarian differences. Despite the failure of Druze and Christian elites to break with the status quo ante and side with the peasants against the consolidation of power exercised by Bashir II, Traboulsi argued that this rebellion represented the beginning of the end of the *muqata'ji* system.[83]

The Christian "commoners" who led the revolt were not uneducated peasants. They were *wakils*, elected village officials who were equipped with missionary education and accountable to their constituents. They now agitated for political representation and reduction of tax burdens that and their co-religionists no longer desired to shoulder. Their grievances also included claims that the Druze community "enjoyed a privileged position in the system."[84] Framing their demands within a sectarian context demonstrated a shift away from the traditional lines of differentiation based upon social standing and regional affiliation.

This revolutionary phenomenon both proved and disproved two key elements of the eventual elite emphasis on sectarian identification as the primary currency of political discourse in Greater Syria. It proved to be the initial threat of the Western political ideal of a well-defined social contract between a ruler and the ruled against the entrenched Ottoman system of local elite competition for power and influence. It was a regime that had summarily excluded the interests of those outside the ranks of the titled elite. This revolt forced notables to address the demands of a better-informed lower segment of society. The reluctance of Druze and Maronite elites to counter a Sunni rival was due to realist concerns of maintaining social position within the hierarchical *muqata'ji* system. While cooperating with Bashir II effectively quashed the revolt, notables in Greater Syria now faced a growing vertical threat to their power from below, while still facing the same horizontal challenges from other notables.

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82 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 10.

83 Ibid.

84 Akarli, *The Long Peace*, 19-20.

The upper strata of society responded to this menace to their hitherto unassailable power with increased emphasis on sectarianism. They emphasized superficial differences of ethnicity and politicized spiritual belief to engender fear of the other, effectively distracting the population from attaining more just and equitable forms of governance. It disproved the assertion made by Ottoman authorities, trying to make sense of the sectarian violence in 1860, that the conflict between rival sects in Mount Lebanon was necessarily primordial in nature.[85] The sectarian strife and violence that marred the following decades did not represent what Ottomanist thinkers characterized as a "primordial outburst of long-standing indigenous hatred."[86] It was the rejoinder of an imperiled aristocracy to the increasingly tangible threat of Western ideas.

In support of the above assertion, Bashir II moved, debatably with such fears in mind, to reduce the salience of class divisions that were highlighted during the revolt in favor of sectarian rivalries. He accomplished this through official conversion to Christianity, an alliance with the Maronite Church, and violent repression.[87] The cumulative effect of these maneuvers succeeded in eliminating popular opposition to his policies. In an effort to further consolidate his power, he turned his newly discovered community against his erstwhile Druze allies, highlighting sectarian cleavages that overshadowed the conflict between landowner and peasant.[88] The powerful combination of the Maronite Church and Bashir II had garnered nearly unanimous support of the Maronite *muqata'jis* while dividing the Druze and Shi'a nobles. The emir's forces crushed the dissident Druze/Shi'a force at Mukhtara[89], demonstrating the poltical and military potential of sectarian unity. These measures to consolidate his power proved to be fleeting. The next significant political upheaval came from without. Within half a decade, French-backed Egyptian forces challenged Shihabi supremacy in Mount Lebanon.

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85 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 142.

86 Makdisi, "After 1860: Debating Religion," 601.

87 Akarli, *The Long Peace*, 21.

88 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 9-11.

89 Akarli, *The Long Peace*, 21.

3. Egyptian Rule 1831-9

The 1831 Egyptian invasion of Syria under the son of Muhammad Ali Pasha, Ibrahim Pasha, introduced the new dynamic of external Great Power competition to the previously insular polity of Greater Syria. With Ibrahim's forces threatening Istanbul itself in 1833, Ottoman sultan, Mahmud II, procured Russian support against further Egyptian advances in the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. French and British diplomats, eager to limit Russian influence in the region, forced the High Porte and the Egyptians to sign an armistice that gave the latter sovereignty over Greater Syria and the Turkish district of Adana.[90] The years of Egyptian rule in Greater Syria arguably served as a catalyst in the region's transition from a feudal mode of political discourse based upon social status to one based upon a sectarian mosaic of competing nationalist visions.

The successful conquest and subsequent occupation of Greater Syria might potentially be viewed as the beginning of Arab nationalism, though evidence of this is weak. In Hourani's *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, he quoted a French visitor to Ibrahim's quarters in Greater Syria who claimed that the Egyptian ruler sought to "give back to the Arab race its nationality and political existence."[91] Although Ibrahim openly disowned his Turkish heritage,[92] his father's administration used Ottoman Turkish and limited the upward mobility of Egyptian Arabs to responsible positions within the bureaucracy.[93] Thus, the notion of Arab nationalism owing its roots to a power struggle between Turkish rulers over Greater Syria seems problematic at best.

Ibrahim Pasha's establishment of municipal councils, a Western institution, carried unintended consequences for the political climate of Greater Syria. Though they possessed little real power compared to larger French and Shihabi Maronite commercial interests, their establishment enabled the development of a political body whose membership was allocated along sectarian lines that openly challenged the hegemony of

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90 Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 73.

91 Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 261. Hourani quotes French missionary from Douin, *Mission Boislecomte*, 249-50.

92 Ibid., 261.

93 Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 71.

the French/Egyptian subsidized rule of Bashir II and Ibrahim Pasha.[94] These councils altered the political landscape, forcing marginalized *muqata'jis* to decide between losing their privileged lifestyle by opposing Egyptian rule or siding with their fellow elites against "commoners." This sectarian institution demonstrated an open challenge to the traditional political discourse within Greater Syria, as they operated outside of the traditional vertical non-sectarian subject-ruler paradigm embodied in the *muqata'ji system*.

Though he managed to confine the military power of the *muqata'ji* to his loyal ally, Bashir Shihab, Ibrahim Pasha faced widespread Druze discontent with his legislation mandating universal conscription.[95] In response to this threat, Ibrahim temporarily and selectively exploited a sectarian dialogue to his advantage, though stopping short of converting to Christianity as Bashir II had done. Instead, he armed Christians, whom he did not label as "infidels," against Druze chieftains and Shi'a, who Ibrahim conversely labeled as "heretics."[96] After Christian forces under Bashir II defeated the Druze chieftains, Ibrahim Pasha mandated in a letter to his loyal emir that, "As regards the Druzes of Jabal al-Shuf, let bygones be bygones. Do not harm them when they return to their homes."[97] The Egyptian ruler's son did not desire to plunge his father's Syrian colony into sectarian warfare. In order to avoid further instability, he momentarily used the divisive discourse to motivate a Christian constituency to serve the interests of a foreign [Egyptian] ruler in suppressing a population of compatriots.

Ibrahim, fearing Christian revolt and wishing to rapidly reclaim the status quo ante,[98] then disarmed his Christian militia causing them to rise up against his rule in concert with Druze, Sunnis, and Shi'a forces.[99] In this instance, landowning elites joined with commoners against Ibrahim's external power, though many did so in the hopes of

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94 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 12.

95 Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 90.

96 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 56.

97 Ibid., excerpt from the letter cited by the author on 56.

98 Ibid., 57.

99 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 12-13.

regaining lost privileges[100] rather than fulfilling nationalist or sectarian ambitions. The elite had a public reluctance to associate their actions with a particular religious or ethnic cause. This was their private and desperate struggle to maintain privileges and status under a French sponsored Egyptian occupation. The *muqata'ji* had, perhaps accidentally, created a catalog of sectarian memories that would provide the basis for conflict in the coming decades. Such sentiments only gained currency after the combined Ottoman, British, and Austrian forces expelled Egyptian forces from Greater Syria, ushering in a period of Ottoman reforms known as the *Tanzimat*.

4. The *Tanzimat* and the Establishment of the *Qa'im Maqamiya*

The *Tanzimat* reforms, initiated by the Ottoman sultan beginning in 1839, were designed to procure British and Austrian military assistance against his Egyptian rivals. These reforms contributed to the fundamental paradigm shift of political interaction in Greater Syria. The imperial decree promised administrative reforms that abolished tax farming, standardized conscription, and eliminated corruption to "all Ottoman subjects, regardless of their religion."[101] The British then led a campaign with Austrian, Ottoman, and Syrian support that ended Egyptian rule in 1840.

Syrian commoners and their *muqata'ji* cooperated in the revolt with the common interest of ridding their society of Egyptian occupiers, though each group had different end goals in mind. The commoners sought an end to the "unbearable 'tyranny'"[102] that had cast its shadow over Greater Syria for nearly a decade. They aimed for increased liberty and a return of legitimate rule called for under the imperial decree. Elites desired a restoration of their privileges that had been curtailed under the oppressive juggernaut of the Egyptians and their Shihabi agents.[103] The victorious Ottoman and British governments also approached the aftermath of Egyptian occupation with varied perspectives. The former sought to restore the High Porte's sovereignty in Greater Syria

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100 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 13.

101 Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 83.

102 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 58.

103 Ibid., 58-9.

in a "secular project of imperial renewal." The British who "read Mount Lebanon in religious tribal terms" viewed it "as a sectarian project of local restoration."[104]

In an effort to restore the old *muqata'ji* system and return Greater Syrian society to its condition prior to the Egyptian invasion, the Ottomans installed Bashir II's cousin, Bashir Qasim, as emir of Mount Lebanon. This satisfied Maronite desires for a Shihabi Christian leader who would guarantee their political supremacy in Mount Lebanon and protection for his communal constituents within Ottoman domains. A British initiative to establish a sectarian council with representatives allotted by religious affiliation and elected by their respective patriarchs tempered their satisfaction. The Druze were dissatisfied on both accounts, as irredentist claims to property and privileges were only partially fulfilled, and they rejected Maronite traditional claims to political supremacy over Mount Lebanon.[105]

The first proclamation inspired greater Christian assertiveness in extending the gains achieved during the Shihabi Emirate and Egyptian rule. The Maronite Church, backed by French diplomats, advocated a return to the Shihab emirate as experienced under Bashir II. The Ottomans, backed by British and Austrian diplomats, only partially satisfied Christian demands in 1843, dividing Mount Lebanon into northern and southern districts termed *qa'im maqam*. An Ottoman Muslim governor was appointed to oversee both districts, with the northern district placed under the rule of Christian Emir Haydar Ahmad Abi-l-Lama' and the southern district under Druze Emir Ahmad Arsalan.[106] These *qa'im maqams* were chosen in an effort to reduce the power of the traditional ruling families and to balance the competing interests of external powers. The French, Austrians, Egyptians, and Maronite Church lobbied for the return of the Shihabi emirate. The British and the Russians favored direct Ottoman rule over Greater Syria.[107]

This development angered Christians. The Maronite Church demanded that the Christian population within the Druze district be placed under the northern emir, touching

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104 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 60.

105 Ibid., 61-2.

106 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 24-5.

107 Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 28.

off Druze/Christian violence in the mixed districts of the southern *qa'im maqamiya*. As a result of the Tanzimat decree and the political division of Mount Lebanon, the Druze found themselves a minority compelled to share power with Christians, who the former considered a "subaltern majority"[108] that had unfairly gained economic power with European help. In addition, the Ottomans had implemented the *wakil* system in the southern district, which provided a Christian and Druze agent to act as community advocates to the Druze *qa'im maqam*, in order to prevent injustices in matters of law and taxation.[109] The Druze, as an Islamic sect, ironically felt betrayed by the Muslim Sultan in Istanbul. The *muqata'ji* system that had traditionally empowered Druze chieftains through tax farming and military power had been undermined by European style reforms that deprived them of their monopoly on land and power.

In 1845, the sultan intervened, sending Ottoman troops to stem the violence and a political envoy, Shekib Effendi, to implement a series of reforms. These inadequately dealt with fundamental issues of Druze *muqata'jis* losing their power and demands for increased political representation for Christian commoners. Instead, Effendi's *règlement* institutionalized sectarian representation in Mount Lebanon, giving each religious community a councilor and a judge on the southern district council. This further diluted the power of Druze *muqata'jis*, as Christian councilors administered judicial and administrative affairs for co-religionists. In the Christian-ruled north, councils and sectarian representation were not instituted. This left Christian commoners without a voice in the district's political affairs that were run by Khazin and Hubaysh family *muqata'jis*, who were loyal to the Maronite Church.[110] Ignoring the social problems associated with *Tanzimat* reforms, the High Porte chose an inadequate sectarian solution that only strengthened the grievances of Druze chieftains and Christian commoners. This political misstep caused further violence that resulted in tragic atrocities, killing many innocent civilians, weakening Istanbul's authority within Greater Syria, and inviting

108 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 26.

109 Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 29.

110 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 26-9.

greater European intervention in regional affairs.[111] The *qa'im maqamiya* system that was intended to fill the void created with the end of the Shihabi emirate and to limit the growing sectarian tensions through geographic partition failed on both accounts. It created a power imbalance that left *ahali* or commoner demands for increased political representation unresolved, while traditional Christian and Druze elites were deprived of the power and influence they had enjoyed under the *muqata'ji* system. This proved a recipe for further violence of an increasingly sectarian nature in the form of revolt, retribution, and ultimately Ottoman repression.

5. The Kisrawan Revolt of 1858-9

In conjunction with weakening Ottoman influence, sectarian violence, and greater European leverage over Mount Lebanon's internal affairs, there came the first rumblings of civil conflict that would destroy the *qa'im maqamiya* and open Greater Syrian society to competing nationalist visions both within and without the Ottoman framework. The Kisrawan revolt involved intra-sectarian rivalries that pitted Christian commoners against Christian Khazin *muqata'ji* in the northern district. The conflict represented what Ussama Makdisi asserts was an alteration from the traditional elite led "religiously-expressed violence [that] regulated and upheld secular boundaries between epistemic communities," to mass violence that "subverted the boundaries between the communities of ignorance and knowledge."[112] This effort to overturn the traditional social hierarchy, had its origins in the *Tanzimat*, as the second decree or *Hatt-i Hümayun* promulgated in 1856, provided the commoners with a new knowledge of their place in Ottoman society. This empowered them to interject their concerns in a political dialogue that was previously reserved exclusively for titled nobility. The Ottoman sultan and his viziers

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111 Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 90-1.

112 Ussama Makdisi, "Corrupting the Sublime Sultanate: The Revolt of Tanyus Shahin in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 1 (Jan. 2000): 183.

envisioned the reform effort as a "secular project of imperial renewal,"[113] though they unknowingly unleashed the forces that ultimately destroyed those "secular boundaries" in favor of a "populist religious discourse."[114]

In the case of the Kisrawan revolt, Christian *muqata'jis* refused to adopt judicial and administrative reforms for their Christian subjects that had been implemented in the mixed Druze/Christian southern *qa'im maqam*. The Christian *ahali*, or commoners, advocated for reform in accordance with the *Tanzimat* that called for social equality of commoners and *muqata'jis,* as well as sociopolitical equality of Mount Lebanon's minority Christian population with the Muslim majority of the Ottoman Empire.[115] The rebels did not seek to overthrow local rulers or challenge the authority of the Sublime Porte. Instead, they viewed themselves as being the sultan's loyal subjects who wished to consolidate the perceived political gains as decreed in imperial reforms within the Ottoman system.[116] The revolt proved a shocking phenomenon to both Ottoman officials and local elites alike because they had viewed the *ahali* as "a politically quiescent population…a passive community whose legitimate and lawful needs were represented by others."[117]

The leader of the rebellion, a muleteer named Tanius Shahin, communicated rebel demands using a sectarian dialogue that identified Christian religious freedom with social equality.[118] This form of political discourse called into question the established Ottoman hierarchy based upon religiously defined communities demarcated by secular boundaries. In that situation, elites interacted within a system of overlapping non-sectarian interests and loyalties. This popular assertiveness, clothed in religious rhetoric, reflected the increasing disregard of the Maronite clergy for the central authority in Istanbul. They

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113 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 60.

114 Makdisi, "Corrupting the Sublime Sultanate," 183.

115 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 31.

116 Makdisi, "Corrupting the Sublime Sultanate," 204-5.

117 Ibid., 201, 204.

118 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 108.

would temporarily bow to the wishes of the latter, however, when the demands of the rebellion exceeded the political space and physical power afforded to it.

Despite succeeding in unseating the Khazin family, establishing a representative council comprised of peasants, wealthy farmers, clergymen, and merchants that governed the affairs of Kisrawan for two years, the movement ultimately failed to agree upon who should retain executive power. In this instance, the neutrality of the Maronite Church proved fatal to the rebellion's ultimate success. Acting as intermediary between commoners and landowners, it filtered the demands of the former, excluding key requests for more equal land distribution and better conditions for tenants. Without Church support for a popularly elected governor and deficient representation of rebel socioeconomic demands, the movement degenerated into riots, looting, and general lawlessness forcing rebel leader, Tanius Shahin, and the Maronite patriarch to renounce the actions of those they claimed to represent.[119] Additionally, the Kisrawan rebels failed to gain the support of the French, as the latter desperately endeavored to dissociate itself with the former and maintain allegiance to the Khazin family who had served as French consuls since the seventeenth century.[120] Though Kisrawan rebels fell short of fulfilling their ultimate goals of social equality between peasant and landowner, Christian and Muslim, the movement demonstrated the obsolescence of the traditional social order. In its place emerged competing sectarian national visions within the collective psyche of minority communities in Greater Syria. The sectarian divisions would be further institutionalized in violent civil conflict that ravaged the Ottoman province the following year.

6. The Sectarian Violence of 1860

The civil conflict of 1860 in Lebanon and Damascus served as the violent conclusion to the collapse of the *muqata'ji* system and its traditional secular modes of knowledgeable elite domination over an ignorant populace. The outcome of the heinous violence that took the lives of thousands and maimed many more, did not result in the full

[119] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 32-3.

[120] Makdisi, "Corrupting the Sublime Sultanate," 205.

implementation of the *Tanzimat* decrees that mandated the equality of all citizens regardless of sectarian affiliation. Instead, it compelled elites to awaken from a state of apparent denial of the nature of the political reality within a reformed Ottoman Empire. They had to adjust their basis for legitimacy in predominantly sectarian terms.

While Tanius Shahin's Kisrawan revolt that insisted on Christian equality under the *Tanzimat* served as a precursor to the violence of 1860, there were additional forces at work that spurred the violence. Leila Fawaz points to the shift of local elites from guarantor of order and security for a particular religious community, who willingly ceded such authority in a strict hierarchy, to one of tacitly inviting violence into their domains.[121] Though she stops short of providing possible reasons for this shift, the preceding discussion of events beginning with the Tax Revolt of 1820, reveal a steady erosion of elite power under the centralizing power of Bashir Shihab, Egyptian rule in the 1830s, and then with the reassertion of Ottoman power after 1840, and the eventual partition of Mount Lebanon.

In addition to these events, Tanius Shahin's actions in the Kisrawan revolt presented distinct challenges to traditional elite hegemony in Greater Syria. These included the rebel leader's open rejection of the Ottoman governor's representative, Emir Yusuf 'Ali Murad; Shahin's claim to represent all Christians and incite his co-religionists in the mixed southern district to rise up against their Druze overlords; and his claim to knowledge that had been previously reserved for the titled elite. This sequence of increasingly blatant challenges to the established order, fractured the traditional solidarity of Druze and Christian notables.[122] Christian notables were presented with the difficult dilemma of either alienating their co-religionists through maintaining the status quo or siding with the "ignorant" *ahali* against the authority of the Sublime Sultanate. Druze elites, on the other hand, were fearful that the Christian population in their districts might agitate with similar demands. This unprecedented shift in political discourse brought

[121] Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 48.

[122] Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 107, 109-10.

about an atmosphere of high tension, "panic," and "sheer apoplexy" among all elites including local, European consuls, and Ottoman officials.[123]

In spite of the heightened sectarian tensions, there were no effective actions taken to prevent the spread of violence. Perhaps both Ottoman and local elite permissiveness towards inter-sectarian violence that rapidly accelerated in frequency in the early months of 1860, served as an avenue for reclaiming lost authority without risking open rebellion against Istanbul or alternatively avoiding the fate that had befallen the Khazins in Kisrawan. Though a collective explanation for elite failure to contain the violence leading up to and during a series of armed confrontations and retribution killings that included the massacres of Hasabiya, Rashaiya, Deir al-Qamar, and Damascus from May through July is problematic, Makdisi points out that it was evident that traditional leaders were "simply not capable of coming to terms with a genuinely popular dimension to communal discourse, and yet…were increasingly aware that they could no longer ignore it."[124]

While elite failure to comprehend the changing political reality of popular involvement in a communal discourse that had previously been reserved for noblemen of knowledge and had excluded the presumably ignorant populace, there also existed a palpable sense of resentment and fear among the Sunni and Druze of Christian assertiveness.[125] The majority fear of a subaltern minority stemmed from perceived favoritism of the Christian European powers toward their co-religionists in Greater Syria. The Jesuits in particular had founded institutions such as the seminary at Ghazir that molded its students in a European image, eschewed local traditions, and diminished the common historical experience their charges shared with their Muslim and Druze compatriots.[126] Leila Fawaz cites the "growing gap between the rich and the poor."[127] The former demographic included an increasing number of Christians who had benefitted

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123 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 120.

124 Ibid., 122.

125 Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 90.

126 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 92-3.

127 Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 100.

from extensive commercial ties with European concerns, while Muslim craftsmen and shopkeepers comprised the majority of the latter. Prosperous before European advances in maritime navigation, their traditional role as land-based port to the caravan trade routes was rendered obsolete. These inequities crystallized in the minds of many Sunnis and Druze when Tanius Shahin and his supporters flew the French flag and extolled the values of the French Revolution.[128]

Fawaz and Cleveland place emphasis on the economic links between the Christian community and their French patrons that were packaged in a sectarian context as the primary catalyst for the violent events of 1860. Following a teleological line of reasoning, Makdisi maintains that the sequence of historically contingent events beginning with Egyptian rule in the 1830s, the fall of the Shihabi emirate, the introduction of *Tanzimat* reforms, and intervention of European powers "actively produced" animosity between religious communities.[129] Makdisi's argument demonstrates that sectarianism and the resultant violence of 1860 was not uniquely attributable to increased levels of Christian knowledge and wealth obtained through preferential ties with European missionaries and commercial concerns. It also included the combined effects of the aforementioned historical sequence that necessarily required the tacit consent of all nobles regardless of sectarian affiliation in the destruction of the traditional *muqata'ji* order. These developments radically altered the system of social and political discourse that had favored elite power expressed through a rigidly defined hierarchy of commoners, local notables, Ottoman governors, the sultan's viziers, and ultimately the sultan himself.

Though sectarianism proved an active construct of elite and commoner imaginations in response to the dissolution of the traditional Ottoman social hierarchy, its emergence as the dominant source of social and political definition was neither uniform nor absolute during the violence of 1860. Division between the interests of the Maronite patriarch, Christian notables, and the popular leader, Tanius Shahin, characterized the Christian community as it faced an escalating series of sectarian violence that alternated

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[128] Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 121.

[129] Ibid., 52.

between Druze and Christian communities and developed into full-scale civil conflict. Shahin advocated coming to the aid of his co-religionists in a struggle for social equality that he waged for the "salvation of 'the' Christian community."[130] The Bishop of Beirut, Tubiyya 'Awn, attempted to comply with Ottoman demands for stability in Kisrawan, though he had no real power to do so.[131] Christian notables were reluctant to join with a commoner while at the same time fearful of popular backlash should they collude with their fellow Druze elites to contain the violence that continued to spiral out of control.[132] Shahin's pledge to aid his co-religionists went unfulfilled due to either illness or his own political ambitions.[133] The Kisrawani Maronites were divided among themselves, as Tanius Shahin's religious vision of social equality was not uniformly accepted within his own social peer group.[134] These divisions contrasted with the relative unity of Druze partisans,[135] who more readily coalesced against the perceived multiple threats of European encroachment, Christian assertiveness, and Ottoman weakness.

The combined factors of Ottoman apathy, impotence, and an inability to reconcile the full consequences of the *Tanzimat* reforms in Greater Syria, represented another important element that both created the requisite conditions and proved elemental in the outcome of the sectarian violence of 1860. The isolated communities of Mount Lebanon were rarely central to imperial Ottoman concerns prior to the nineteenth century. The Ottoman governor in Damascus deputized the Ma'an and then Shihab families to ensure that the *iqta*, annual land tax, was collected and remitted to the central treasury in Istanbul. Thus, when news of a novel form of revolt in Kisrawan, a remote and previously insignificant region, reached others, it caused an elevated sense of Ottoman disquietude at their immediate inability to re-assert imperial authority.[136] This revolt and the communal violence that followed transcended the traditional tax revolts. It prescribed

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130 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 115.

131 Ibid., 121-2.

132 Ibid., 125-6.

133 Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 65.

134 Ibid., 53.

135 Hitti, *Lebanon in History: From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 436.

136 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 105.

a vision of social equality that defied the established social order. This was something for which the Ottoman officials were ill prepared to handle because they had never considered the possibility of an alternate interpretation of imperial reforms, especially from a group of ignorant *ahali*.

Great Power politics surrounding its European territories had diverted the focus of the imperial lens from its Arab lands, as the Ottoman Empire struggled to resist European pressure to encroach territorially on its domains. The Crimean War involved the Ottomans in alliance with the British and the French against the Russian Empire. The Russians invaded Ottoman territory after the sultan refused to accede to an agreement that would allow Russia to intervene on behalf of the Ottoman Empire's Orthodox Christian community.[137] Despite being on the "winning" side of the conflict, Ottoman finances were burdened by loans procured on European money markets that financed a massive military modernization effort.[138] As a result of these costly distractions, the Ottoman authorities were unable to forcefully intervene when faced with a crisis in Greater Syria. European consuls and Christian advocates in Beirut lobbied to no avail for increased Ottoman military presence to maintain regional stability. Instead, the small numbers of imperial troops, who were poorly supplied and often unpaid, neglected their duties and participated with sectarian partisans in looting.[139] There were also allegations that Ottoman soldiers were complicit with the Druze in the early battles of the civil conflict, did not resist Druze attacks on unarmed Christians at the massacres of Hasbaiya and Rashaiya, and failed to intervene in the Druze attack on the last Christian stronghold of Zahleh.[140] The Ottoman authorities also did little to prevent the massacre at Deir al-Qamar. They only possessed the capability to politely ask the Druze forces to leave and offered no resistance to Druze attacks on their barracks at Beit al-Din.[141] In the Damascus massacre that followed the violence in Mount Lebanon, Ottoman authorities were similarly unable to prevent the slaughter of at least 1000 Christians and foreigners at

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137 Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 88.

138 Ibid., 86-7.

139 Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 48.

140 Ibid., 50, 59, 63-4, 66-7.

the hands of a massive mob of Sunni and Druze rioters. In fact, the Ottoman troops fired on a mob approaching the Christian quarter, though later, after quitting their posts, some soldiers actually participated in the riots.[142]

Ottoman officials characterized the conflict that emerged as a result of primordial rivalries between minority sects in Mount Lebanon rather than directly confronting the dire situation created through their own efforts at reform. European powers and local elites adopted the same characterization, though they did so out of self-interest rather than any altruistic impulse or sense of loyalty to the Ottoman state.[143] This denial of a transformed political reality along with Ottoman weakness and disdain of direct involvement in Syrian affairs, prevented any significant imperial action that might have prevented the disastrous events of 1860. While the Ottomans were not the sole source of the political failures that enabled the violence, they abdicated their responsibility as a modern territorially based nation state to exercise a monopoly of violence within their borders. The events of 1860 made apparent the literal and figurative bankruptcy of the Ottoman state and aided in the crystallization of sectarian forms of political identity Local Syrian and Lebanese elites embraced an actively created sectarian history that would define and justify an exclusive nationalist vision in the wider competition for power within a state whose total dissolution was only delayed by Great Power competition over its disparate parts.

B. CONCLUSION

The rise of sectarianism in Greater Syria that ultimately resulted in the horrific violence in 1860, created a political atmosphere that increased the salience of both intra- and inter-sectarian divisions. As will be seen in Chapter 3, these cleavages were instrumental in limiting the efficacy of the national movement, creating disparate national visions that prevented unity and mass mobilization, as well as encouraging Ottoman despotism that squelched elite political support and confined the movement to secret

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141 Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 71,73.

142 Ibid., 88.

143 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 130-1.

organizations and private salon discussions. Ultimately, sectarianism was a critical element that prevented the formation of single Arab state prior to World War I, and allowed the partition of Greater Syria into two separate states under French mandate. These sectarian divisions still plague Lebanon to the present day and remain potentially latent under Ba'ath authoritarian rule in Syria.

The confluence of unique historical events in Greater Syria precipitated the downfall of the *muqata'ji* system and its associated political discourse based upon overlapping loyalties, elite competition for power, and a sense of stability ensured by secular boundaries that separated the civil affairs of each sect within the *millet* system. The critical phenomena that facilitated this fundamental shift in Greater Syrian society, included the introduction of European commercial and educational institutions, the commensurate ascension of a new class of Christian notables within the ranks of a rigid Ottoman hierarchy, the encouragement of Christian settlement by Druze *muqata'ji* to work in the silk trade in the southern principalities of Mount Lebanon during the rule of the Druze Ma'an emirate, the peaceful succession of elite power in the heterogeneous polity of Mount Lebanon to the Sunni Shihab family, and the efforts of Bashir II to consolidate his power that reduced the ranks of the elite and introduced sectarian rivalry in to the ranks of the elite. Even though each element had a profound effect on Greater Syrian society, they all took place within the boundaries of the traditional social order.

The Egyptian invasion and subsequent occupation of 1831-9 signaled the increased salience of Great Power competition that permeated internal Ottoman affairs. Additionally, Bashir Shihab, a Christian emir, openly sided with Egyptian governor, Ibrahim Pasha, against Ottoman, Druze, British, and Austrian interests. While incurring some inter-sectarian resentment, Bashir's actions more importantly compelled the Ottoman government to seek a costly alliance with the European powers. The critical consequence of the alliance that forced an Egyptian withdrawal from Greater Syria was the Ottoman concession to implement the *Tanzimat* reforms beginning in 1839 that would ultimately succeed in destroying the very foundations of the Ottoman order.

The *Hatt-i Sharif,* or *Gülhane,* edict that decreed that all Ottoman subjects would be viewed equally regardless of religious affiliation, combined with increasing sectarian

resentment between the Christian and Druze elites, and an Ottoman desire to re-assert order and authority in Greater Syria, provided the impetus for sectarian violence that resulted in the partition of Mount Lebanon into two separate principalities. The southern region that included a heterogeneous Druze/Christian population adopted social reforms including *wakils*, or community representatives that theoretically advocated Christian interests directly to the Druze *qa'im maqadam* to ensure the equal consideration of the communal interests of the former. Ironically, these progressive reforms were not implemented in the more homogeneous north, where the Christian Khazin family provided stewardship for an increasingly educated community and faced elite competition from the displaced Shihabs who were backed by France.

With Ottoman central authority weakened as a result of war with Russia in the Crimea and widespread dissatisfaction with the lack of social progress in the north following the second *Tanzimat* decree in 1856, the Kisrawan revolt of 1858-9 succeeded in overturning the traditional Ottoman social order that had arguably succeeded in preventing open sectarian competition. Thus, Greater Syrian society fell victim to religiously based violence and civil conflict, as the elites' traditional basis for legitimacy had been rendered obsolete in the Kisrawan rebellion. Additionally, the assertive and uniquely religious nature of Tanius Shahin's claims for Christian equality that promised armed action in their fulfillment incurred Muslim and Druze resentment, which sparked a vicious cycle of communal violence that devolved into open civil conflict, massacres and significant population displacement in the middle months of 1860. The violence was fueled by a shift in the basis of elite power, as the communal leaders desperately tried to create a new order that would allow for the retention of a modicum of privileges they enjoyed as titled nobility under the *muqata'ji*. Their creation of a uniquely sectarian historical memory provided the basis for competing national visions that would rise to the fore of Greater Syrian political consciousness under the false tranquility of the *Mutasarrifiya*. Ultimately, sectarianism was a critical element that prevented the formation of single Arab state prior to World War I, and it allowed the partition of Greater Syria into two separate states under French mandate. These sectarian divisions still plague Lebanon to the present day and remain latent under Ba'ath authoritarian rule in Syria.

IV. 1860-1914 AN INCOHERENT NATIONAL VISION

Several factors critically hindered the ability of the national movement within Greater Syria to achieve mass mobilization in favor of a separate Arab state prior to World War I. These factors included a decided philosophical difference between Christian and Muslim national visions, the movement's confinement to secrecy during thirty years of Hamidian repression, the parallel efforts of the Maronite Lebanists, and a lack of elite political support until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. This chapter explores how this occurred in the aftermath of the 1860 civil conflict under the administration of the special governorate, the *Mutasarrifiya*, until 1914.

A. THE AFTERMATH OF 1860

Subsequent to the sectarian violence that beset Mount Lebanon and Damascus in 1860, the Ottoman Sultan sent his foreign minister, Fu'ad Pasha, to restore order in a society that had been irrevocably transformed under the reforms of the Tanzimat. The Ottoman regime sought both to minimize the lingering resentment within Greater Syria and to mitigate the extent of European intervention associated with the violent clashes that left thousands displaced and had provoked sentiments of outrage in the European press.[144] Fu'ad Pasha operated on the premise that the violence of 1860 was necessarily the reappearance of primordial tribal rivalries that served as a hindrance to Ottoman imperial reforms.[145] Further, Pasha deemed his actions as a magnanimous dispensation of justice over an unruly and ignorant mob with a mandate inspired by the sultan's feelings of divinely inspired "fatherly compassion."[146] Pasha viewed his campaign to replace sectarian rivalry with Ottoman nationalism, or *Osmanlilik*, as the "modern, reforming state uplifting and civilizing its putatively uncivilized frontier."[147]

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144 Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 108, 132-3, 139, 164-5.

145 Makdisi, "After 1860: Debating Religion," 603.

146 Akarli, *The Long Peace*, 35.

147 Makdisi, "After 1860: Debating Religion," 602.

Damage control efforts were accomplished through a forceful demonstration of imperial might and punitive justice as the central state imposed its will on the outlying territories. Fu'ad Pasha acted with brutal efficiency, ordering the summary execution of hundreds of alleged Damascene riot participants and Druze notables in Mount Lebanon to deter future contradiction of Ottoman reforms and modernization.[148] The ranks of the Druze elite and their attendant political power were decimated. Those who avoided capital punishment either fled into exile or were imprisoned. The remaining Druze leaders were saddled with paying reparations for damage caused to Christian property.[149] Further, Pasha installed a non-Arab Ottoman Christian as governor of Mount Lebanon who presided over an Administrative Council composed of a multi-sectarian membership based upon a pre-determined ratio of seven Christians to five Muslims.[150] Ironically, in what the Ottoman authorities considered measures to help the backward populations of Mount Lebanon and Damascus transcend primordial rivalries, they instead only served to solidify the salience of sectarian identities. Each community reacted to what was perceived as "authoritarian Ottomanism"[151] in an effort to secure their own unique interests rather than pursuing efforts at truth, reconciliation and finding a cooperative solution to the political power imbalance created under the *Tanzimat*. The fact that traditional Lebanese nobility were deprived of real political power with the appointment of a non-Arab governor, an increased willingness of Ottoman authorities to respond to unrest with severe repression, and the formal dissolution of the *muqata'ji* system under the *Règlement organique*,[152] tempered any reaction that challenged the new special Ottoman governorate or *mutasarrifiya*. Though beneath the placid exterior of a period Engin Akarli labels *The Long Peace*,[153] competing national visions colored by sectarian

148 Makdisi, "After 1860: Debating Religion," 603.

149 Akarli, *The Long Peace*, 30.

150 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 43.

151 Makdisi, "After 1860: Debating Religion," 605.

152 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 43. The Règlement organique was the international protocol negotiated with representatives of Great Britain, France, Russia, Prussia, and Austria that created the mutasarrifiya. It was formally implemented on 9 June 1861 effectively merging the two separate principalities of Mount Lebanon that existed during the qa'im maqamiya.

153 Akarli, *The Long Peace.*

biases emerged, each uniquely attempting to reconcile the profound changes to Greater Syria's political landscape with their shared historical past.

B. THE EMERGENCE OF NATIONALISM IN GREATER SYRIA

The *mutasarrifiya's* overarching aim of replacing supposed ancient sectarian rivalries with Ottoman nationalism failed to resonate with both Muslim and Christian communities in Mount Lebanon. The former either rejected or resented the notion of religious equality, and the latter viewed Fu'ad Pasha's draconian measures as a Muslim ploy to maintain social and political primacy.[154] As a result, the voices of secular nationalists, such as Butrus al-Bustani, appealed to both Christian intellectual classes and commoners alike; however, his message of Greater Syrian national unity based upon the revolutionary social concept of "secular meritocracy" that would transcend sectarian loyalties[155] only reached a small number of Muslim intellectuals, and it threatened the social and economic status quo enjoyed by both Christian and Muslim wealthy elites. According to Salibi, in contrast to Christian Arab nationalist assertions that Islam was an important cultural phenomenon within a greater national identity, Arab Muslim commoners viewed Arab nationalism and Islam as essentially the same idea. Muslim elites used this equation that emphasized sectarian identification, which along with unbending Ottoman imperialism, the fear of western encroachment, and the threat of an exclusive Maronite Lebanism as a vehicle to gain political power.[156] These factors prevented intellectuals from coalescing around a single national ideal, though the debate did not fall as neatly along sectarian lines as might be presumed. An analysis of the Arab intellectual movement's development in Greater Syria is informative in illustrating how the aforementioned divisions within the Arab community prevented the emergence of a mass movement for Syrian independence.

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154 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 46-7.

155 Makdisi, "After 1860: Debating Religion," 607.

156 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 48-9.

Though Muslim and Druze resentment of Christian ascendancy and the Tanzimat reforms manifested itself in brutal massacres in 1860[157], there was a significant "awakening," or *al-nahdah,* spurred by the proliferation of western ideas through extensive French Catholic, Russian Orthodox and US Protestant missionary activity. These western interlopers succeeded in establishing numerous educational institutions, including most prominently the American University of Beirut and the Université St. Joseph, also in Beirut. Along with education, missionaries also imported Arabic printing presses that combined to spark an Arabic cultural renaissance.

The awakening appealed primarily to Christians, who accepted Western social and political values, though not without some reservations, since these modern norms originated in the societies of co-religionists. Furthermore, the concept of social equality and religious freedom presented an opportunity to transcend their traditional social and political inferiority vis-à-vis the Muslim majority.

Muslims, for their part, struggled to accommodate these same values within the context of widespread resentment at the perceived loss of Muslim primacy within the Ottoman state.[158] The communal disparity in adherents and enthusiasm for the *nahdah* notwithstanding, the notion of a shared Arab identity based upon common language and literary heritage that pre-dated the Islamic/Christian split gained currency among Muslim and Christian intellectuals alike.

C. ISLAMIC ARAB NATIONALISM OR ISLAMIC MODERNISM

Tracing the roots of Islamic Arab national thought in Greater Syria takes one to Egypt where Albert Hourani in his seminal work, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, outlines the life and writings of Rifa'a Badawi Rafi' al-Tahtawi. A member of an elite Egyptian family that lost its wealth when Muhammad 'Ali seized their tax farm in reforms designed to consolidate the Egyptian ruler's power,[159] Tahtawi became a favored understudy of Shaikh 'Attar at the renowned institution of religious learning, al-Azhar, in

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157 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 34-6.

158 Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 129-31.

159 Ibid., 68-9.

Cairo. The latter, as rector of the school and an ardent French advocate, introduced his pupil to secular subjects such as history and geography. 'Attar also procured Tahtawi's appointment as an imam in the Egyptian army that enabled the latter to follow his mentor to Paris where he studied the ideas of Rousseau, Voltaire, and Montesquieu from 1826-31.[160]

The ideas of these eighteenth century thinkers impressed upon Tahtawi the applicability of a territorially defined nation state in which the inhabitants shared a sense of patriotism to a modernizing Egypt.[161] Within such an entity, he adhered to Muslim orthodoxy, maintaining that a ruler, as God's representative, possessed "absolute executive power…tempered by respect for the law and those who preserve it."[162] In what remains a current subject of debate in Islamic intellectual circles, Tahtawi believed that *shari'a* law was compatible with natural law and that the ruler should entrust the *ulama* or Muslim scholars with the interpretation of the law. To this end, he encouraged the modernization of education for jurists and went even further in advocating universal primary education for young men *and* women to encourage "citizen" participation in the processes of government.[163]

Tahtawi did not espouse uncritical adaptation of these Western ideas, however, as he warned against the conflation of secular patriotism with religion. Tahtawi presciently favored the former as essential to the health of civilization, for without this sense of *hubb al-watan* or love of country "civilisation must be condemned to perish."[164] This point resonated in Egypt, which was relatively homogeneous with the exception of the small Coptic Christian minority. Egyptian acceptance of the idea of a love of *watan* stood in contrast to Greater Syrian society where, as previously discussed, the end of tax farming and its associated quasi-feudal social structure increased the salience of sectarian identification and devolved into violent proof of Tahtawi's hypothesis in 1860. Caught

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160 Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 69.

161 Ibid., 70.

162 Ibid., 73.

163 Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation-State*, 3rd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 87.

164 Ibid.

between Ibrahim Pasha's oppressive rule during the 1830's and the futility of his efforts to impose an artificial Ottoman patriotism through the *Tanzimat*, voices akin to Tahtawi emerged only subsequent to the 1860 societal disintegration in Greater Syria, though they were not Muslims.

Muslim thinkers like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-97) and his understudy, Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), disdained the incursions of the Christian West. These scholars who, like Tahtawi, studied at the al-Azhar in Egypt, differed from their predecessor in that they espoused a different course for Islamic society's accommodation of modernity. Their writings and beliefs, Dawn collectively labels as "Islamic modernism and revivalism," bemoaned the lost glory of Islamic civilization. They blamed the Ottoman and Egyptian governments, not Europeans or the *dhimmi* sects, for uncritically implementing Western style reforms. They supported this assertion with the irredentist Arab claims to the intellectual fundamentals of the European Enlightenment and felt that Europe's modern state was directly attributable to the achievements of Islam. 'Abduh and al-Afghani advocated a revival of Islam in its pure form, which included constitutional government and individual liberties that were in accordance with these fundamental principles.[165]

Al-Afghani deviated from 'Abduh's focus on an Arab centered solution to the decline of Islamic civilization. The former advocated Pan-Islamism, which emphasized the national unity of all Muslims regardless of linguistic, ethnic, or cultural differences. This emphasis on Muslim unity to counter the Western threat played right into the hands of the Ottoman Sultan, 'Abd al-Hamid II, who had eagerly adopted al-Afghani's doctrine to legitimize his suspension of the Constitution in 1877 and subsequent thirty-three years of authoritarian rule. Al-Afghani subsequently renounced his desire for an Islamic state and shifted the emphasis to a sense of Pan-Islamic fraternity that would help the Islamic community resist colonialism without condoning despotism.[166]

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165 Khalidi, *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, 6-7.

166 Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation-State*, 91-2.

‘Abduh, for his part, followed a far less arcane path in pursuing his vision of Islamic modernism. “He offered far more institutional solutions to the problem of what can arguably be deemed either Islamic decline or stagnation in relation to Western civilization. He maintained that Muslim society had declined with the spread of *taqlid* or blind imitation under Turkish rulers, who were incapable of knowing the true significance of the Prophet’s teaching.”[167] “He disapproved of their authoritarian style of leadership, opining that their saturation of the *ulama* with sympathetic scholars had dulled Muslim society’s connection with rational thought. ‘Abduh desired to reform the *ulama* in order to reconnect with the rational religion, thus demonstrating that Islam was indeed compatible with modernity.”[168] This meant the “restoration of the Arabs to their position of leadership among the Muslims.”[169]

Rashid Rida and ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi further developed ‘Abduh’s ideas in Greater Syria. The former, who stopped short of promoting Arab separatism from Turkish rule, emphasized the two elements of “the true Islam…acceptance of the unity of God and consultation in matters of State.” Rida felt that Ottoman rulers had encouraged their subjects to remain on the periphery of governance through rejection of God’s unity. This disconnect of Muslims with their State was the result of disunity of language, law, and equality of individuals, which were intended to be unified under the caliphate.[170] In order to rectify this deviant course of Islamic society, Rida felt Islam needed a system of laws that were compatible with modernity, yet adhered to the fundamental principles of Islam. Those were to be the subject of reciprocal consultation between the caliph and the *ulama*, though the caliphate would not exist as a single state. He did support the existence of the Ottoman state as a “caliphate of necessity,” for besides its obvious failings, it provided the bulwark against corruptive foreign influence.[171] Zeine characterizes Rida’s reforms as fundamentally religious because the latter had

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167 Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 150.

168 Ibid., 140.

169 Khalidi, *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, 9.

170 Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 228.

171 Ibid., 239-40.

condemned the reform efforts in Egypt and Turkey as the work of "atheists and infidels because religion is not fundamental to their ideas of nationality."[172]

Kawakibi's national philosophy emphasized that Arabs were entitled to an honored position within Islam, because they were linked to its origins through both language and ancestry. He believed that only the Arabs of Arabia could save Islam from the moral turpitude of the Turkish sultans, who placed higher priority on political concerns than those of Islam.[173] In order to return Islam to its rightful place within society and defend against corrupt leadership, he advocated a joint Arab and Turkish Ottoman Empire where Arabs would serve as religious and cultural leaders.

Early Arab nationalists adopted Kawakibi's arguably secular views that distinguished between an Arab and Islamic *umma*.[174] They used these principles to counter Ottoman authoritarian nationalism, though when juxtaposed with Rida's beliefs, effectively divided the Muslim Arab nationalist current into two opposing narratives. Kawakibi employed Arab uniqueness within Islam as a vehicle of elite purification within Islamic society, thus separating national rulers from affecting the fundamental essence of Islamic principles. As a result, he is sometimes labeled as an Islamic secularist whose ideas leaned closer to Arab nationalism, because his theory allowed Arab Muslims to maintain their religious allegiance to the Ottoman sultan while asserting their distinct ethnicity. Rida, on the other hand, desired to reform the *ulama* to its rightful stature, from which it could serve as a check on the power of rulers. These opposing views of Arab nationalism possessed one critical commonality: the support of the Ottoman state, albeit grudgingly, by Rida. This mutual unwillingness to dissolve the Ottoman state out of a fear of European domination and the theological difficulties associated with its dissolution, prevented the coherent political expression of a Greater Syrian state within the Muslim community.

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172 Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, 63.

173 Ibid., 57-9; and Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 63.

174 Khalidi, *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, 9.

D. CHRISTIAN SYRIAN ARAB NATIONALISM AND LEBANISM

Butrus al-Bustani (1819-83) was a central figure in the *nahdah*, who endeavored to apply Tahtawi's vision of *hubb al-watan* in the more complex polity of Greater Syria. Bustani, born into a Maronite family in Mount Lebanon, began his education as a seminarian at Ayn Waraqa and then moved to Beirut in 1840, where he served as a dragoman for the British in the effort to oust Egyptian rule. He then worked as a teacher in an American Protestant mission, where he collaborated on a translation of the bible into Arabic[175] and founded the "first literary society in the Arab world, *Jam'iyyat al-Adab w'al-'Ulum* (The Literary and Scientific Society)" in 1847.[176] In 1859, he founded a non-sectarian association, *al-'Umda al-Adabiyya li- Ishhdr al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya*, that promoted the publication of Arab literature. He continued these efforts to raise Arab cultural awareness beyond the literary arts, establishing the Syrian Scientific Society in 1868 with open membership to all religions. As a result of these efforts, Abu-Manneh credits Bustani with creating "the basis of Arab cultural homogeneity as a means of fostering collective consciousness among the people of Syria."[177]

The events of the following decade leading up to and including the cataclysmic violence of 1860 had a profound effect on Bustani's political philosophy. During this period the Sublime Porte issued the second *Tanzimat* proclamation in 1856, which according to Abu-Manneh, gave Bustani the conviction to work within the Ottoman system to achieve reform rather than work against it.[178] He then actively condemned and mourned the sectarian violence of 1860, publishing the pamphlet, *Nafir Suriyya*. In it he appealed to his "fellow countrymen"[179] to move away from sectarianism that had been encouraged by "education and socialization" rather than primordial "nature or

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[175] Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism: The Ideas of Butrus Al-Bustani," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 11, no. 3 (May, 1980): 289.

[176] Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation-State*, 103.

[177] Abu-Manneh, "The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism," 292-3.

[178] Ibid., 290.

[179] Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 101. Quoted directly from Nafir Suriyya, i. (29 Sept. 1860).

impulse."[180] He entreated his fellow citizens, as "one who loves the nation,"[181] to awaken to their commonalities, which at the most basic level was a love of the Syrian *watan* or homeland. Perhaps unfortunately for the fortunes of the Syrian nation, Bustani was not a politician. He was an educator, whose significant efforts were confined to publishing, translating, and participating in societies that endeavored to boost Arab awareness of their shared cultural identity that transcended sectarian affiliation. It is not clear from the different sources presented, the degree to which his calls for national unity resonated with the larger population, as he dared not run afoul of the Ottoman authorities that generally tolerated his work.[182]

This lack of clarity with respect to his popular appeal did not prevent a vigorous debate on the exact nature of Bustani's impact upon the Arab nationalist or Arabist movement. C. Ernest Dawn in Khalidi et al.'s *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, argues that Bustani was fundamentally an "Ottoman patriot" rather than an Arab nationalist.[183] While this may ostensibly be correct, other scholars argue that Bustani was at least a leading figure in creating a modern understanding of what it meant to be Arab. Salibi considers Bustani's "idea of a secular Arab nationality…the first clear articulation of the idea on record."[184] Tibi argues that Bustani is the "most important nineteenth-century Arab national writer…in whose work the revival of Arab culture takes on clearly national overtones."[185]

From this survey, it is apparent that Bustani at least contributed to the initial formulation and shaped the debate of what nationalism meant to Arabs of all faiths living in Syria. It is also evident that his writings and cultural societies were not sufficient to mobilize a formal nationalist movement in Syria prior to the Young Turk revolt in

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180 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 164.

181 Ibid. Quoted directly from Nafir Surriya (Beirut: Fikr lil-abhath wa al-nashr, 1990 [1860]).

182 Abu-Manneh, "The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism," 294.

183 Khalidi, *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, 7.

184 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 45.

185 Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation-State*, 102.

1908.[186] In Bustani's case, the lack of popular mobilization in response to his appeals stemmed from the fact that his national sentiments did not equate to separatism vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire. Perhaps wisely, as a Christian acting in an Ottoman polity traditionally dominated by Muslims, Bustani practically opted to work for secular equality of Syrians within the Ottoman context.[187]

Another reason Bustani's nationalist appeals did not translate into immediate popular mobilization might have been his sectarian affiliation. His being a linked to Protestant missionary education in a time of confessional strife may have led Muslims to discount his message regardless of its possible merits. Bustani personally distanced himself from any affiliation with sectarian organizations, even castigating his erstwhile association with Protestant missionaries and their educational methods. He viewed Western education as deliberately exclusionary of Ottoman and Syrian history, charging that their Eurocentric focus "aggravates division and gives rise to generations estranged from their culture and people." He advocated a universal system of secular education that inculcated students from a knowledge base of shared ancestral experience that would bridge the cultural divide between Christians and Muslims. He believed that such a system would form the fundamental basis of a Syrian national mythology.[188]

Bustani supported his words with action, founding "the National School" in Beirut in 1863, where classes were primarily conducted in Arabic. It rapidly gained popularity and included students from throughout the Ottoman Empire, enjoying Ottoman support as well.[189] Bustani's meld of pro-Ottoman and anti-European sentiment found only partial accord with Muslim intellectuals, while he found himself diametrically opposed to the views of his native Maronite community. Bustani's hopeful mix of cultural Arabism, political Ottomanism, and Syrian nationalism languished in a society that only begrudgingly forgot the events of 1860 under Ottoman authoritarianism.

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[186] Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 101.

[187] Abu-Manneh, "The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism," 290; and Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 45.

[188] Abu-Manneh, "The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism," 290.

[189] Ibid., 294.

Other Christian intellectuals who followed Bustani, such as his son Sulayman, Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, Adib Ishaq, Shlibi Shumayyyil, and Farah Antun similarly maintained their faith in the Ottoman system while writing critically of the current state of affairs and advocating for further reform.[190] Many were relegated to organizing in exile in either Egypt or France during the era of Hamidian repression after 1876. Their version of what arguably falls between secular Arab nationalism and Syrian nationalism never gained momentum because they had neither the support of the European powers, of whose perceived arrogance they were openly critical, nor were they ever rewarded for their loyalty to the Ottoman authorities with the equalizing reforms for which they advocated.

Christian Lebanese notables and merchants living in Paris founded the Ottoman League in 1908 that aimed to place the Arab nation on an equal footing with other modern states. With the revolt of the Young Turks in 1909, Ottoman society returned to constitutionalism, and Christian Arab nationalists returned to Syria and Lebanon. Remarkably, a combined Christian/Muslim Beirut Reform Movement arose in 1912-13 that demanded Arabic as the official regional language and decentralization of power to local Arab leaders. The organization was promptly shut down, and Arab nationalists were publicly executed during Jamal Pasha's brutal reign as governor during World War I.[191] Despite suffering the same eventual fate in World War I, the Christian community did not unanimously support the creation of an Arab state in Greater Syria.

The critical line of separation with respect to national vision within Christian sects in Greater Syria prior to World War I, fell between the Melchites and the Maronites. The former composed of Greek Catholic and Greek Orthodox factions were more numerous. Kamal Salibi asserts in his discussion of Christian Arab nationalists in *A House of Many Mansions* that despite having fewer members, the Maronites sense of communal

190 Khalidi, *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, 7.

191 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 67-71.

"solidarity…and their geographic concentration in a…limited mountain territory" necessarily were more effective in their unabashed agitation for a separate state than their co-religionists.[192]

The Maronite Patriarch and his clergy were the glue that kept the community together through the challenges posed by the deposition of Bashir Shihab following Egyptian rule, the revolt of Tanius Shahin, and the disastrous civil conflict with Druze elites in 1860. Unlike other Christian denominations, the Maronites clearly expressed a national vision of a politically separate entity as early as 1844 in Bishop Murad's *Notice historique* to Louis-Philippe of France. As non-Muslims in an increasingly sectarian polity, the Maronite clergy felt no theological qualms with claiming their "rightful place alongside European Christian states." Murad's *Notice* deliberately created a revisionist historical narrative that replaced the Ottoman version of an elite community that transcended religious lines in favor of one that placed Maronite elites as undisputed masters of an autonomous Christian Lebanon. They actively appealed to French national sentiments, going so far as to liken Mount Lebanon to an extension of sovereign French territory and claiming that Maronite elites had blood ties to France.[193]

The idea of Lebanism faded, however, during the political reorganizations of the *qa'im maqamiya* and the *mutasarrifiya*, as laical Maronites were more concerned with problems internal to their community.[194] Lebanism did not emerge again as political ideal until after the Young Turk rebellion in 1908, when two members of the Khazin family published *Perpetuelle indépendance legislative et judiciare du Liban* in 1910, that petitioned France for aid against the centralizing policies of the Turks and proponed territorial enlargement of Lebanon to ensure its economic viability as an independent state.[195]

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192 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 41.

193 Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 82-3.

194 Kaufman, *Reviving Phoenicia: The Search for Identity in Lebanon*, 5-6.

195 Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 285-6.

In addition to a fond affiliation with France, the Maronites sought to distinguish themselves from the Islamic majority, claiming to have descended from ancient Phoenician civilization that controlled Mediterranean trade routes dating back to the twelfth century BC.[196] The notion of a Lebanese link to the ancient Phoenician civilization did not factor into the early justifications for a Maronite dominated Lebanese entity until after World War I, though it percolated in intellectual circles beginning with Tannus al-Shidyaq's work that detailed the history of notable families in Mount Lebanon. It continued with inclusion of Phoenician society in discussions of Syrian history in Bustani's aforementioned Syrian Scientific Society in the 1850s and Syro-Lebanese publications *al-Muqtataf* and *al-Hilal*, published in the latter half of the century.[197] All of these discussions of the Phoenician legacy occurred in the context of a Greater Syrian region that did not include the possibility of separate Syrian and Lebanese nation states.

With the exception of Murad's *Notice* and the Khazin's publication in 1910, the idea of a separate Lebanese entity was not articulated until Maronite Patriarch Elias Hoyek did so at the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919. As Kaufman aptly concludes when discussing Bulus Nujaym's *La Question du Liban*, that the "Lebanese political framework, based on historical and geographical justifications…developed parallel to, and not in opposition with, Syrian and even Arab notions."[198] Christians in Mount Lebanon, despite not having to reconcile the religious legitimacy of the Ottoman Sultan and being geographically concentrated, were unable to effectively articulate a coherent national vision until three distinct versions emerged following another instance of transformative violence in World War I. Despite being condemned to silence or forced to deliberate in secrecy like Syrian Christian Arab nationalists during the era of Hamidian repression, this parallel, yet separate, national effort between Christian sects contributed to the political conditions that made the formation of either an independent or autonomous Greater Syrian state impossible prior to World War I.

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196 Kaufman, *Reviving Phoenicia: The Search for Identity in Lebanon*, 3.

197 Ibid., 39-41.

198 Ibid., 48.

E. THE ABBREVIATED RE-AWAKENING OF ARAB NATIONALISM

The various nationalist movements within Greater Syria developed in secrecy subsequent to the suspension of the Ottoman Constitution in 1877, and they were forced to organize outside of Greater Syria, namely in Egypt and France. There were minor instances of anonymous anti-Turkish placards being posted on walls of buildings in Damascus and Beirut in 1880. Traboulsi and Zeine both believed that the placards were part of a plot orchestrated by the reinstated Ottoman reformer, Midhat Pasha who served as *wali* of Syria, to separate the Arab province from Turkey. Sultan ʻAbd al-Hamid subsequently deposed Pasha from his governorship in 1881, and banished him to the Arabian Peninsula, citing allegations of a separatist plan. Whoever the culprit actually was, it failed to encourage popular national mobilization within Greater Syria, as according to Acting British Consul-General John Dickson, "The feeling they evinced is more one of curiosity as to their origin than anything else."[199]

Though there was not any open collaboration between Christian and Muslim Arabists in a formal setting in the late nineteenth century, there were literary societies in Beirut that provided a forum for airing and comparing grievances against the Ottoman state among other issues. In addition, there were two known clandestine societies, the first of which was disbanded shortly after the deposition of Midhat Pasha, and the second also was dissolved shortly after its establishment in 1902. The latter society called for a return to the constitution and the ouster of Sultan ʻAbd al-Hamid, while the former was composed of mostly Syrian Protestant College students and disbanded in association with the aforementioned posting of anti-Ottoman placards in Beirut.[200] Zeine attributes this lack of action prior to the Young Turk rebellion in 1908-09 to the Muslim community's reluctance to weaken the Islamic leadership through internal struggle while the present threat of European colonial incursion loomed nearby. Thus, the ideals of reforming and strengthening the Ottoman government without effecting its dismemberment into separate nation states, as essentially espoused by both Syrian Christian and Muslim

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[199] Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, 57-9; and Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 69.

[200] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 69.

intellectuals, found favor with the majority of Ottoman citizens with the arguable exception of the Maronites in Lebanon.[201] Repression under the guise of preserving Ottoman national identity effectively prevented the coherent political expression of both secular and Islamic Arab nationalism prior to 1909.

Arab nationalists were able to enter into formal Ottoman politics for the first time with the reinstatement of Parliament, though were in the minority until 1914. The victorious Turkish party, the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP), held a superior political position and relegated Arab nationalists to the ranks of the opposition. The former came to power making promises that were remarkably similar to those that had been decreed by Ottoman sultans under the *Tanzimat*, and like the previous regime, the CUP were reluctant to take actions that would actually enact the reforms. Faced with agitation in both Arab and European provinces for universal equality under the Ottoman state, the CUP closed ranks and made Pan-Islamism under the Ottoman Empire's guardianship as the legitimating force for maintaining the status quo. Arabs were generally skeptical of this agenda because the sectarian makeup of the CUP was neither predominantly Muslim nor Turkish, and there were allegations that Salonikan Jews actually had orchestrated the movement. Despite the questionable validity of these allegations, Arab fears were fulfilled when the CUP implemented the policy of Turkification.[202] Laws that mandated the sole use of Turkish as the primary language of government and education were the manifestations of Turkish assertiveness.[203] These exclusive policies enacted in a sectarian landscape arguably resulted in the galvanization of the Arab nationalist movement, though its efforts proved to be disjointed and failed to change Greater Syria's disposition within the Ottoman Empire prior to World War I.

The combined inter-sectarian organization, the Beirut Reform Movement, founded in 1912, and composed of notables and intellectuals was the most prominent group advocating reforms. They demanded the recognition of Arabic as a language within the Empire, its inclusion in Parliament, decentralization of power to local

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201 Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, 60-1.

202 Ibid., 70-1.

203 Khalidi, *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, 12.

governments, increasing the power of local councils vis-à-vis the governor, and reducing military service requirements. The CUP branded the Reform Movement's initiatives as "treason," dismissing the governor and disbanding the group in one day in April 1913.[204]

The anti-Ottoman sentiment among Arabs was by no means ubiquitous, as Dawn cites an "intra-Arab elite conflict" as the principal catalyst for Arab nationalism's increasing political strength prior to World War I. The Arab nationalists chose their path of opposition out of a desire to displace "rival Syrian notables who were satisfied with and occupied positions in the Ottoman government, an opposition that remained a minority until 1918."[205]

F. CONCLUSION

Several factors critically hindered the ability of the national movement within Greater Syria to achieve mass mobilization in favor of a separate Arab state prior to World I. These factors included a decided philosophical difference between Christian and Muslim national visions, the movement's confinement to secrecy during thirty years of Hamidian repression, the parallel efforts of the Maronite Lebanists, and a lack of elite political support until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.

This political atmosphere enabled Great Britain and France to draw the borders of two separate states, Lebanon and Syria, to further their respective regional commercial interests without regard for traditional societal composition.[206] The partition was formalized in wartime agreements, including the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 and the succeeding 1920 San Remo Agreement, which gave France a mandate over Syria and Lebanon effectively preventing Arab unity under a nationalist banner that would potentially endanger French or British interests.

In concluding these agreements, the British reneged on wartime promises to the Hashemite family that guaranteed Faysal the Syrian throne in return for his sponsorship

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204 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 70-1.

205 Khalidi, *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, 11-12.

206 Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 20.

of an Arab revolt against Ottoman rule. In addition, both European powers ignored the findings of the U.S.-led King-Crane commission that conducted a comprehensive survey of Greater Syria and cited 80% of survey respondents favored a united Syria, 74% favored independence, and 60% were in favor of a US mandate if required.[207] The French, seeking to protect the nascent Christian enclave of power in the Lebanon and protect its traditional interests in spite of overwhelming public sentiment in favor of Syrian independence, moved against Faysal and defeated his forces at Maysalun.[208] This cemented the two-state French mandate, which was instrumental in creating the problems associated with sectarian strife in Lebanon and the tight grip of authoritarian rule in Syria.

[207] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 78.

[208] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 20-5.

V. CONCLUSION

Nationalists in Greater Syria within the context of a reforming Ottoman Empire prior to World War I failed to form a cohesive political expression of intentions through united action, thus allowing the formation of separate Lebanese and Syrian states under French mandate. This failure was attributable to three primary factors. First, the increased salience of sectarian identification as a determinant factor in political loyalty and action among the larger population prevented a unified Arab national vision. These cleavages highlighted a decided philosophical difference between Christian and Muslim national visions, as well as encouraging the parallel efforts of the Maronite Lebanists within the Christian sect. Second, the movement's confinement to secrecy during thirty years of Hamidian repression limited the wider distribution of national ideas to the larger population of Greater Syria. Third, elites, desiring to maintain their commercial interests and social status in the Ottoman system, exercised conscious reluctance to openly support a nationalist movement.

In order to illustrate the historical basis of sectarianism that significantly hindered the maturation of the national debate in Greater Syria, the first chapter outlined the competing sectarian versions of Syro-Lebanese History, namely Shi'a, Druze, Maronite, and Sunni versions. These divergent sectarian historical narratives formed a basis for tracing the evolution of communitarian rivalries that became salient throughout the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The second chapter investigated the rise of sectarianism within the context of the Tanzimat reforms from 1839-1860. This was a critical period where traditional expressions of political power and identification based upon social status were replaced with those rooted in religious or ethnic affiliation. This transformation created a tense and uncertain atmosphere of fundamental social change that revolved around how to incorporate the Western concept of equal treatment of all citizens regardless of religion in a binding social contract between a state's ruler and its people. The confluence of unique historical events in Greater Syria precipitated the downfall of the *muqata'ji* system and

its associated political discourse based upon overlapping loyalties, elite competition for power, and a sense of stability ensured by secular boundaries that separated the civil affairs of each sect within the *millet* system.

With the disintegration of the traditional order, Greater Syrian society fell victim to religiously based violence and civil conflict, as the elites' traditional basis for legitimacy was rendered obsolete in the Kisrawan rebellion. The revolt's leader, Tanius Shahin, made religiously exclusive claims for Christian equality that promised armed action in their fulfillment. This in turn incurred Muslim and Druze resentment, which sparked a vicious cycle of communal violence that devolved in to open civil conflict, massacres and significant population displacement in the middle months of 1860. The violence was fueled by a shift in the basis of elite power, as communal leaders desperately tried to create a new order that would allow for the retention of a modicum of privileges they enjoyed as titled nobility under the *muqata'ji*. This shift in the basis of elite power from a master-subject hierarchy with secular boundaries to an order characterized by sectarian rivalry encouraged through Western style reforms, provided the basis for competing national visions that would rise to the fore of Greater Syrian political consciousness under the false tranquility of the *Mutasarrifiya*.

The third chapter identified the competing factors that critically hindered the ability of the national movement within Greater Syria to achieve mass mobilization in the aftermath of the 1860 civil conflict under the administration of the special Ottoman governorate, the *Mutasarrifiya*, prior to World I. These factors included a decided philosophical difference between Christian and Muslim national visions and the parallel efforts of the Maronite Lebanists, which was highlighted with the increased salience of sectarian rivalries. Thus, the movement was divided along inter-sectarian and intra-sectarian lines making coherent articulation of demands for a separate Arab state in Greater Syria a virtual impossibility. Further, the national movement was confined to secrecy and remained sequestered outside the purview of the larger populace during thirty years of Hamidian repression. As a result there were no serious attempts at popular mobilization behind a formal nationalist cause before World War I. Finally, the repressive political landscape under the *Mutasarrifiya* encouraged elites to maintain their

basis of power within the Ottoman system, depriving national movements in Greater Syria of the requisite political support to challenge Ottoman hegemony before 1914.

The transformative events of the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Greater Syria prevented the creation of a single Arab state prior to World War I. This resulted in foreign interference, namely French, which continued to emphasize the sectarian differences that developed during this period to culturally divide the population and geographically partition the territory in two, creating the states of Lebanon and Syria. They accomplished this through concluding wartime agreements with the British, which ignored the findings of the U.S.-led King-Crane commission that found overwhelming public support of an independent Arab nation. This gave France a mandate over Syria and Lebanon and ended the brief reign of Hashemite King Faysal in Syria.[209] Despite claiming to represent Arab nationalism, Syrian elites rejected Faysal's rule, again demonstrating the incoherence of the Arab cause.

The people of Greater Syria, recently liberated from oppressive Ottoman rule, immediately came under the stewardship of colonial masters who divided the territory into two separate states. Then the French implicitly sanctioned sectarian differences, principally in the heterogeneous population of Lebanon, with the establishment of supposedly democratic institutions that were rendered ineffectual through a communal distribution of political power. Whether or not this was intentional is subject to debate and beyond the scope of this study. The legacy of French colonialism that prevented the further crystallization of a national movement, with the exception of Maronite Lebanists, bequeathed a fundamentally unjust regime to the populations of Lebanon and Syria that persists in each nation under a different guise to the present day.

External actors that succeeded French colonialism after World War II, including U.S. and Soviet rivals during the Cold War that then gave way to U.S. regional hegemony have been significant contributors to continued sectarian rivalries that prevent the peaceful development of these states to their economic and cultural potential. Lebanon suffered through a disastrous fourteen-year civil conflict fought along sectarian

[209] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 78; and Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 20-5.

lines that destroyed the prosperous service based economy that had developed since World War II. Syria languishes in economic and political isolation, as the international community under U.S. leadership has sought to punish its authoritarian regime for favoring the Soviet Union during the Cold War and its subsequent support for Hezbollah as a balancing force against Israeli regional influence.

As arguably the world's leading power, U.S. policymakers should consider this historical legacy of stunted national sentiment when considering methods of achieving a more peaceful and vibrant Syria and Lebanon. There have been limited efforts at sectarian peace and reconciliation in Lebanon subsequent to the 1989 Ta'if accords. These include those between Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement and Hezbollah prior to forming a political alliance after the assassination of then Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafiq Hariri, in February 2005, as well as the National Dialogue that was established as part of the Doha Agreement concluded in June 2008.

The Doha Agreement negotiated between the Lebanese majority, March 14th coalition, and the minority, March 8th coalition, includes a commitment to renew efforts to fully implement the aforementioned Ta'if Accords. To that end the National Dialogue is intended to aid in reconciling sectarian differences that erupted in violent conflict in May 2008. Disappointingly, a recent report from the United Nations Special Envoy for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1559, Terje Roed-Larsen, informed the United Nations Security Council that "major strides" had been achieved since Doha. These included compliance with constitutional provisions for a free and fair presidential election, the adoption of a new electoral law, and the October 2008 agreement for the establishment of diplomatic relations between Lebanon and Syria.[210] These developments are disappointing because they fail to address the fundamental issue of eradicating sectarian politics from Lebanon.

[210] United Nations Security Council, "Security Council Told of 'Major Strides' in Lebanon which, Despite Challenges, could Lead to Stable Government with Authority; Special Envoy Reports on Progress, Says Continuing Need for Parties to Halt Violence, Commit to Peaceful Settlement of Political Disputes," *M2 Presswire* (October 31, 2008).

The United States should encourage this element of the Doha Agreement and Ta'if Accords as a priority over implementation of UN Resolution 1559. Any efforts to achieve legitimate Lebanese sovereignty, versus the present de facto form that poorly conceals internal rivalries, must begin with transcending sectarian politics through truth and reconciliation, as well as a constitutional amendment banning sectarian parties outright and abolishing the communal allocation of political power under the National Pact of 1943. The United States can encourage this by removing Hezbollah from the U.S. government list of terrorist organizations and altering a policy of open support for the March 14th coalition in favor of neutrality vis-à-vis internal Lebanese politics. In addition, the U.S. along with regional actors such as Syria should encourage semiofficial dialogues between the rival factions that have been proven to lead to positive progress in the seemingly intractable political conflicts following the abolition of apartheid in South Africa.[211] This would send a strong message that sectarian politics are no longer viable as a means for maintaining political power in Lebanon. Nearly 170 years of sectarian strife that was invented and then maintained by successive generations of elites with the help of external powers, has prevented true national sovereignty in the modern sense for the state of Lebanon. The United States should continue the efforts begun under King-Crane to achieve legitimate self-determination for Lebanon.

The Syrian case, though far less complex in sectarian terms, should also be approached with the knowledge of the destructive force of sectarianism that prevented coherent articulation of a national idea prior to World War I. France, similar to the Maronites in Lebanon, promoted the minority Alawi sect to power under the mandatory administration. They accomplished this through division of Sunni territory into two states of Damascus and Aleppo. They then emphasized the existence of distinct sectarian minorities, the Druze and Alawites, giving them administratively separate states to themselves within the mandate in 1922. In 1924 the French merged Damascus and Aleppo, giving power to the Sunni elites and effectively excluding Alawis and Druze from Syrian politics. This further institutionalized the sectarian polarization of Syrian politics.

[211] Daniel Lieberfeld, "Promoting Tractability in South Africa and Israel/Palestine: The Role of Semiofficial Meetings," *The American Behavioral Scientist* 50, no. 11 (July 2007): 1542.

The sectarian divisions begun under Ottoman rule and promoted throughout the French mandate proved a de-stablizing force in Syrian politics. Druze and Alawi became the backbone of the Syrian military officer corps, because Sunni elites viewed a military career as unsuitable for their children. As a result beginning in 1949 a series of military coups gradually eroded the power of the Sunni elite in favor of the minority sects who comprised the leadership of the Syrian armed forces. Michel Aflaq's Ba'ath Party rose to power in the instability that characterized the Syrian political landscape until Hafiz al-Asad took power in a coup in 1970.[212] Since then Syria became the target of U.S. animosity, because an open alliance with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. In the post Cold War environment Syria maintained a significant military presence in Lebanon until April 2005 that sought to maintain a modicum of internal Lebanese stability and balance against U.S. sponsored Israeli power in the region. Subsequent to the smooth transfer of power from Hafiz al-Asad to his son, Bashar, in 2000, Syria remains isolated internationally with many latent internal divisions that are a legacy of nineteenth and early twentieth century Ottoman rule.

With the knowledge of the origins of what lies beneath the Ba'ath Party's authoritarian rule, U.S. policymakers must act to reduce the threatening U.S. stance of action against the regime for the slightest intransigence. Instead, the Syrian regime should be given assurances that its support for Hezbollah does not negatively affect its relationship with the U.S. Making this policy change, as well as using its considerable economic leverage in its relationship with Israel, the U.S. should act to accelerate a settlement of the Golan Heights dispute dating back to 1967. Having accomplished these two measures, a certain element of mutual trust will be established in the U.S. – Syrian relationship. This critical trust will facilitate open dialogue with respect to democratic reform. Parallel to talks regarding reform, there should be semi-official dialogues similar to those recommended in the Lebanese case aimed at preemptively repairing the latent sectarian cleavages. These discussions will also better prepare the Syrian population for the social and political changes that are long overdue.

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[212] Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 218-25, 324-5.

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